

Knights of The Cross



by
Henryk Sienkiewicz
Author of
Quo Vadis

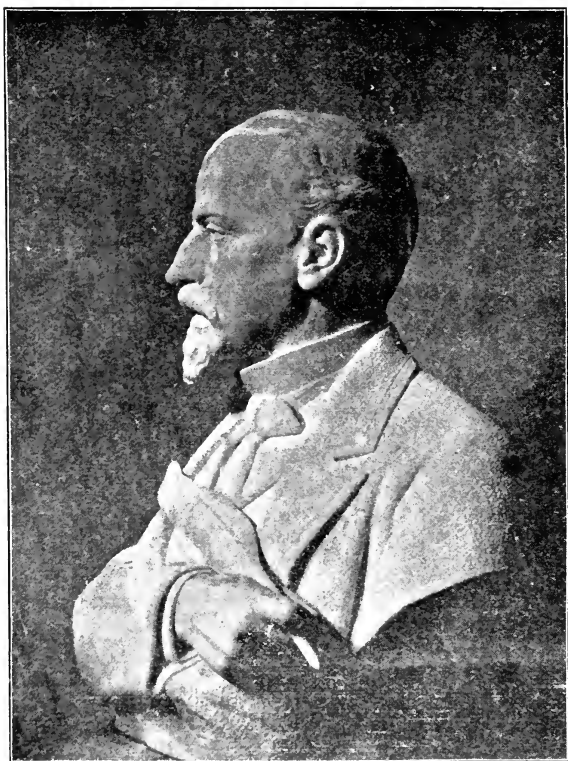


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Joe Underwood

THE KNIGHT OF THE CROSS

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BUST OF HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ

THE KNIGHTS OF THE CROSS

OR

KRZYŻACY

Historical Romance

BY

HENRYK SIENKIEWICZ

AUTHOR OF "QUO VADIS," "THE DELUGE," "WITH FIRE AND SWORD,"
"PAN MICHAEL," ETC., ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL POLISH BY

SAMUEL A. BINION

AUTHOR OF

"ANCIENT EGYPT," ETC. TRANSLATOR OF "QUO VADIS," ETC.

VOLUME I

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BY
R. F. FENNO & COMPANY

The Knight of the Cross.

Hon. William T. Harris, LL. D.

Commissioner of Education

MY DEAR DOCTOR :—

This translation, of one of the greatest novels of Poland's foremost modern writer, Henryk Sienkiewicz, I beg to dedicate to you. Apart for my high personal regard for you, my reason for selecting you among all my literary friends, is: that you are a historian and philosopher, and can therefore best appreciate works of this kind.

SAMUEL A. BINION,

New York City.



To the Reader.

HERE you have, gentle reader—old writers always called you gentle—something very much more than a novel to amuse an idle hour. To read it will be enjoyable pastime, no doubt; but the brilliant romance of the brilliant author calls upon you for some exercise of the finest sympathy and intelligence; sympathy for a glorious nation which, with only one exception, has suffered beyond all other nations; intelligence, of the sources of that unspeakable and immeasurable love and of the great things that may yet befall before those woes are atoned for and due punishment for them meted out to their guilty authors.

Poland! Poland! The very name carries with it sighings and groanings, nation-murder, brilliance, beauty, patriotism, splendors, self-sacrifice through generations of gallant men and exquisite women; indomitable endurance of bands of noble people carrying through world-wide exile the sacred fire of wrath against the oppressor, and uttering in every clime a cry of appeal to Humanity to rescue Poland.

It was indeed a terrible moment in history, when the three military monarchies of Europe, Russia, Austria and Prussia, swooped down upon the glorious but unhappy country, torn by internal trouble, and determined to kill it and divide up its dominions. All were alike guilty, as far as motive went. But Holy Russia—Holy!—since that horrible

time has taken upon herself by far the greatest burden of political crime in her dealings with that noble nation. Every evil passion bred of despotism, of theological hatred, of rancorous ancient enmities, and the ghastliest official corruption, have combined in Russian action for more than one hundred and fifty years, to turn Poland into a hell on earth. Her very language was proscribed.

This is not the place to give details of that unhappy country's woes. But suffice it to say, that Poland, in spite of fatuous prohibitions, has had a great literature since the loss of her independence, and that literature has so kept alive the soul of the nation, that with justice Poland sings her great patriotic song:

"Poland is not yet lost
As long as we live. . . ."

The nation is still alive in its writers and their works, their splendid poetry and prose.

It is a pity that so few of these great writers are widely known. But most people have heard of Jan Kochanowski, of Mikolaj Rey, of Rubinski, of Szymanowicz, of Poland's great genius in this century, one of the supreme poets of the world, Adam Mickiewicz, of Joseph Ignac, of Kraszewski, who is as prolific in literary and scientific works as Alexander von Humboldt, and of hundreds of others in all branches of science and art, too numerous to mention here.

And it is remarkable that the author of this book, Henryk Sienkiewicz, should of late have attained such prominence in the public eye and found a place in the heart of mankind. It is of good omen. Thus, Poland, in spite of her fetters, is

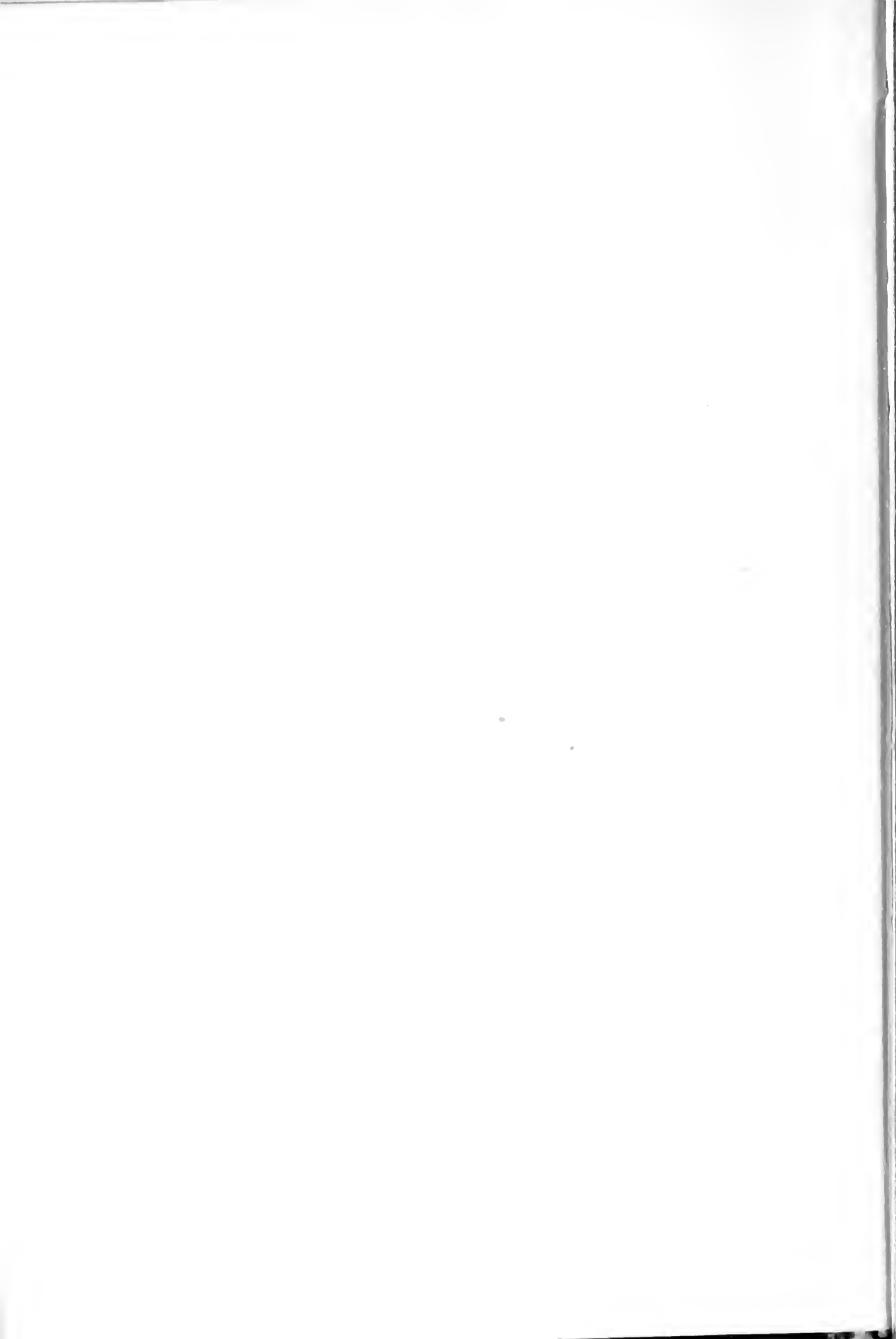
keeping step in the very van of the most progressive nations.

The romance of Sienkiewicz in this volume is perhaps the most interesting and fascinating he has yet produced. It is in the very first rank of imaginative and historical romance. The time and scene of the noble story are laid in the middle ages during the conquest of Pagan Lithuania by the military and priestly order of the "Krzyzacy" Knights of the Cross. And the story exhibits with splendid force the collision of race passions and fierce, violent individualities which accompanied that struggle. Those who read it will, in addition to their thrilling interest in the tragical and varied incidents, gain no little insight into the origin and working of the inextinguishable race hatred between Teuton and Slav. It was an unfortunate thing surely, that the conversion of the heathen Lithuanians and Zmudzians was committed so largely to that curious variety of the missionary, the armed knight, banded in brotherhood, sacred and military. To say the least, his sword was a weapon dangerous to his evangelizing purpose. He was always in doubt whether to present to the heathen the one end of it, as a cross for adoration, or the other, as a point *to kill with*. And so, if Poland *was* made a Catholic nation, she was also made an undying and unalterable hater of the German, the Teutonic name and person.

And so this noble, historical tale, surpassed perhaps by none in literature, is commended to the thoughtful attention and appreciation of the reader.

SAMUEL A. BINION.

NEW YORK, May 9, 1899.



KNIGHTS OF THE CROSS.

CHAPTER I.

IN Tyniec,¹ in the inn under "Dreadful Urus," which belonged to the abbey, a few people were sitting, listening to the talk of a military man who had come from afar, and was telling them of the adventures which he had experienced during the war and his journey.

He had a large beard but he was not yet old, and he was almost gigantic but thin, with broad shoulders; he wore his hair in a net ornamented with beads; he was dressed in a leather jacket, which was marked by the cuirass, and he wore a belt composed of brass buckles; in the belt he had a knife in a horn scabbard, and at his side a short traveling sword.

Near by him at the table, was sitting a youth with long hair and joyful look, evidently his comrade, or perhaps a shield-bearer, because he also was

¹ The Benedictine Abbey at Tyniec was in Poland as important and rich, relatively, as the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Près in France. In those times the order organized by Saint Benoît (Benedictus) was the most important factor in the civilization and material prosperity of the country. The order contained 17,000 abbeys. From it came 24 Popes; 200 Cardinals; 1,600 Archbishops; 4,000 Bishops; 15,000 Writers; 1,500 Saints; 5,000 Beatified; 43 Emperors, and 44 Kings. These figures are material facts showing the importance of the order. About its influence on art, literature and culture one could write a volume.

dressed as for a journey in a similar leather jacket. The rest of the company was composed of two noblemen from the vicinity of Krakow and of three townsmen with red folding caps, the thin tops of which were hanging down their sides to their elbows.

The host, a German, dressed in a faded cowl with large, white collar, was pouring beer for them from a bucket into earthen mugs, and in the meanwhile he was listening with great curiosity to the military adventures.

The burghers were listening with still greater curiosity. In these times, the hatred, which during the time of King Lokietek had separated the city and the knighthood, had been very much quenched, and the burghers were prouder than in the following centuries. They called them still *des allerdurchluchtigsten Kuniges und Herren* and they appreciated their readiness *ad concessionem pecuniarum*; therefore one would very often see in the inns, the merchants drinking with the noblemen like brothers. They were even welcome, because having plenty of money, usually they paid for those who had coats of arms.

Therefore they were sitting there and talking, from time to time winking at the host to fill up the mugs.

"Noble knight, you have seen a good piece of the world!" said one of the merchants.

"Not many of those who are now coming to Krakow from all parts, have seen as much," answered the knight.

"There will be plenty of them," said the merchant. "There is to be a great feast and great pleasure for the king and the queen! The king

has ordered the queen's chamber to be upholstered with golden brocade, embroidered with pearls, and a canopy of the same material over her. There will be such entertainments and tournaments, as the world has never seen before."

"Uncle Gamroth, don't interrupt the knight," said the second merchant.

"Friend Eyertreter, I am not interrupting; only I think that he also will be glad to know about what they are talking, because I am sure he is going to Krakow. We cannot return to the city today at any rate, because they will shut the gates."

"And you speak twenty words, in reply to one. You are growing old, Uncle Gamroth!"

"But I can carry a whole piece of wet broadcloth just the same."

"Great thing! the cloth through which one can see, as through a sieve."

But further dispute was stopped by the knight, who said:

"Yes, I will stay in Krakow because I have heard about the tournaments and I will be glad to try my strength in the lists during the combats; and this youth, my nephew, who although young and smooth faced, has already seen many cuirasses on the ground, will also enter the lists."

The guests glanced at the youth who laughed mirthfully, and putting his long hair behind his ears, placed the mug of beer to his mouth.

The older knight added:

"Even if we would like to return, we have no place to go."

"How is that?" asked one of the nobles.

"Where are you from, and what do they call you?"

"I am Macko of Bogdaniec, and this lad, the son of my brother, calls himself Zbyszko. Our coat of arms is Tempa Podkowa, and our war-cry is Grady!"

"Where is Bogdaniec?"

"Bah! better ask, lord brother, where it was, because it is no more. During the war between Grzymalczyks and Nalenczs,¹ Bogdaniec was burned, and we were robbed of everything; the servants ran away. Only the bare soil remained, because even the farmers who were in the neighborhood, fled into the forests. The father of this lad, rebuilt; but the next year, a flood took everything. Then my brother died, and after his death I remained with the orphan. Then I thought: 'I can't stay!' I heard about the war for which Jasko of Olesnica, whom the king, Wladyslaw, sent to Wilno after he sent Mikolaj of Moskorzowo, was collecting soldiers. I knew a worthy abbot, Janko of Tulcza, to whom I gave my land as security for the money I needed to buy armor and horses, necessary for a war expedition. The boy, twelve years old, I put on a young horse and we went to Jasko of Olesnica."

"With the youth?"

"He was not even a youth then, but he has been strong since childhood. When he was twelve, he used to rest a crossbow on the ground, press it against his chest and turn the crank. None of the Englishmen, whom I have seen in Wilno, could do better."

"Was he so strong?"

"He used to carry my helmet, and when he

¹Two powerful families.

passed thirteen winters, he could carry my spear also."

"You had plenty of fighting there!"

"Because of Witold. The prince was with the Knights of the Cross, and every year they used to make an expedition against Lithuania, as far as Wilno. Different people went with them: Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, who are the best bowmen, Czechs, Swiss and Burgundians. They cut down the forests, burned the castles on their way and finally they devastated Lithuania with fire and sword so badly, that the people who were living in that country, wanted to leave it and search for another land, even to the end of the world, even among Belial's children, only far from the Germans."

"We heard here, that the Lithuanians wanted to go away with their wives and children, but we did not believe it."

"And I looked at it. Hej! If not for Mikolaj of Moskorzowo, for Jasko of Olesnica, and without any boasting, if not for us, there would be no Wilno now."

"We know. You did not surrender the castle."

"We did not. And now notice what I am going to say, because I have experience in military matters. The old people used to say: 'furious Litwa'¹—and it's true! They fight well, but they cannot withstand the knights in the field. When the horses of the Germans are sunk in the marshes, or when there is a thick forest—that's different."

"The Germans are good soldiers!" exclaimed the burghers.

"They stay like a wall, man beside man, in their

¹ Lithuania.

iron armor. They advance in one compact body. They strike, and the Litwa are scattered like sand, or throw themselves flat on the ground and are trampled down. There are not only Germans among them, because men of all nations serve with the Knights of the Cross. And they are brave! Often before a battle a knight stoops, stretches his lance, and rushes alone against the whole army."

"Christ!" exclaimed Gamroth. "And who among them are the best soldiers?"

"It depends. With the crossbow, the best is the Englishman, who can pierce a suit of armor through and through, and at a hundred steps he will not miss a dove. Czechowie (Bohemians) cut dreadfully with axes. For the big two-handed sword the German is the best. The Swiss is glad to strike the helmets with an iron flail, but the greatest knights are those who come from France. These will fight on horseback and on foot, and in the meanwhile they will speak very brave words, which however you will not understand, because it is such a strange language. They are pious people. They criticise us through the Germans. They say we are defending the heathen and the Turks against the cross, and they want to prove it by a knightly duel. And such God's judgment is going to be held between four knights from their side, and four from our side, and they are going to fight at the the court of Wacław, the Roman and Bohemian king."¹

Here the curiosity so increased among the noblemen and merchants, that they stretched their necks in the direction of Macko of Bogdaniec and they asked :

¹ Historical fact.

"And who are the knights from our side? Speak quickly!" Macko raised the mug to his mouth, drank and then answered:

"Ej, don't be afraid about them. There is Jan of Wloszczowa, castellan of Dobrzyn; there's Mikolaj of Waszmuntow; there are Jasko of Zdakow and Jarosz of Czechow: all glorious knights and sturdy fellows. No matter which weapons they choose,—swords or axes—nothing new to them! It will be worth while for human eyes to see it and for human ears to hear it—because, as I said, even if you press the throat of a Frenchman with your foot, he will still reply with knightly words. Therefore so help me God and Holy Cross they will outtalk us, but our knights will defeat them."

"That will be glory, if God will bless us," said one of the nobles.

"And Saint Stanislaw!" added another. Then turning toward Macko, he asked him further:

"Well! tell us some more! You praised the Germans and other knights because they are valiant and have conquered Litwa easily. Did they not have harder work with you? Did they go against you readily? How did it happen? Praise our knights."

But evidently Macko of Bogdaniec was not a braggart, because he answered modestly:

"Those who had just returned from foreign lands, attacked us readily; but after they tried once or twice, they attacked us with less assurance, because our people are hardened and they reproached us for that hardness: 'You despise,' they used to say, 'death, but you help the Saracens, and you will be damned for it.' And with us

the deadly grudge increased, because their taunt is not true! The king and the queen have christened Litwa and everyone there tries to worship the Lord Christ although not everyone knows how. And it is known also, that our gracious lord, when in the cathedral of Plock they threw down the devil, ordered them to put a candle before him—and the priests were obliged to tell him that he ought not to do it. No wonder then about an ordinary man! Therefore many of them say to themselves:

“‘The *kniaz*¹ ordered us to be baptized, therefore I was baptized; he ordered us to bow before the Christ, and I bowed; but why should I grudge a little piece of cheese to the old heathen devils, or why should I not throw them some turnips; why should I not pour the foam off of the beer? If I do not do it, then my horses will die; or my cows will be sick, or their milk will turn into blood—or there will be some trouble with the harvest.’ And many of them do this, and they are suspected. But they are doing it because of their ignorance and their fear of the devils. Those devils were better off in times of yore. They used to have their own groves and they used to take the horses which they rode for their tithe. But to-day, the groves are cut down and they have nothing to eat—in the cities the bells ring, therefore the devils are hiding in the thickest forest, and they howl there from loneliness. If a Litwin² goes to the forest, then they pull him by his sheep-skin overcoat and they say: ‘Give!’ Some of them give, but there are also courageous boys, who will not give and then the devils catch them. One of the boys put some beans in an ox bladder and immediately three hun-

¹ Prince.

² Lithuanian.

dred devils entered there. And he stuffed the bladder with a service-tree peg, brought them to Wilno and sold them to the Franciscan priests, who gave him twenty *skojcow*; ¹ he did this to destroy the enemies of Christ's name. I have seen that bladder with my own eyes; a dreadful stench came from it, because in that way those dirty spirits manifested their fear before holy water."

"And who counted them, that you know there were three hundred devils," asked the merchant Gamroth, intelligently.

"The Litwin counted them, when he saw them entering the bladder. It was evident that they were there, because one would know it from the stench, and nobody wished to take out the peg to count them."

"What wonders, what wonders!" exclaimed one of the nobles.

"I have seen many great wonders, because everything is peculiar among them. They are shaggy and hardly any *kniaz* combs his hair; they live on baked turnips, which they prefer to any other food, because they say that bravery comes from eating them. They live in the forests with their cattle and snakes; they are not abstinent in eating nor drinking. They despise the married women, but greatly respect the girls to whom they attribute great power. They say that if a girl rubs a man with dried leaves, it will stop colic."

"It's worth while to have colic, if the women are beautiful!" exclaimed Uncle Evertreter.

"Ask Zbyszko about it," answered Macko of Bogdaniec.

¹ Money—it is difficult to tell the value exactly,

Zbyszko laughed so heartily that the bench began to shake beneath him.

"There are some beautiful ones," he said. "Ryngalla was charming."

"Who is Ryngalla? Quick!"

"What? you haven't heard about Ryngalla?" asked Macko.

"We have not heard a word."

"She was Witold's sister, and the wife of Henryk, Prince Mazowiecki."

"You don't say! Which Prince Henryk? There was only one Prince Mazowiecki, elect¹ of Plock, but he died."

"The same one. He expected a dispensation from Rome, but death gave him his dispensation, because evidently he had not pleased God by his action. Jasko of Olesnica sent me with a letter to Prince Witold, when Prince Henryk, elect of Plock, was sent by the king to Ryterswerder. At that time, Witold was tired of the war, because he could not capture Wilno, and our king was tired of his own brothers and their dissipation. The king having noticed that Witold was shrewder and more intelligent than his own brothers, sent the bishop to him, to persuade him to leave the Knights of the Cross, and return to his allegiance, for which he promised to make him ruler over Litwa. Witold, always fond of changing, listened with pleasure to the embassy. There were also a feast and tournaments. The elect mounted a horse, although the other bishops did not approve of it, and in the lists he showed his knightly strength. All the princes of Mazowsze are very strong; it is well known, that even the girls of that blood can easily break

¹ Bishop.

horseshoes. In the beginning the prince threw three knights from their saddles; the second time he threw five of them. He threw me from my saddle, and in the beginning of the encounter, Zbyszko's horse reared and he was thrown. The prince took all the prizes from the hands of the beautiful Ryngalla, before whom he kneeled in full armor. They fell so much in love with each other, that during the feasts, the *clerici*¹ pulled him from her by his sleeves and her brother, Witold, restrained her. The prince said: 'I will give myself a dispensation, and the pope, if not the one in Rome, then the one in Avignon, will confirm it, but I must marry her immediately—otherwise I will burn up!' It was a great offence against God, but Witold did not dare to oppose him, because he did not want to displease the ambassador—and so there was a wedding. Then they went to Suraz, and afterward to Sluck, to the great sorrow of this youth, Zbyszko, who, according to the German custom, had selected the Princess Ryngalla to be the lady of his heart and had promised her eternal fidelity."

"Bah!" suddenly interrupted Zbyszko, "it's true. But afterward the people said that Ryngalla regretted being the wife of the elect (because he, although married, did not want to renounce his spiritual dignity) and feeling that God's blessing could not be over such a marriage, poisoned her husband. When I heard that, I asked a pious hermit, living not far from Lublin, to absolve me from that vow."

"He was a hermit," answered Macko, laughing, "but was he pious? I don't know; we went to

¹Priests.

him on Friday, and he was splitting bear's bones with an axe, and sucking the marrow so hard, that there was music in his throat."

"But he said that the marrow was not meat, and besides he had received permission to do it, because after sucking marrow, he used to have marvelous visions during his sleep and the next day he could prophesy until noontime."

"Well, well!" answered Macko. "And the beautiful Ryngalla is a widow and she may call you to her service."

"It would be in vain, because I am going to choose another lady, whom I will serve till death, and then I will find a wife."

"You must first find the girdle of a knight."

"*Owa!*¹ There will be plenty of tournaments. And before that the king will not dub a single knight. I can measure myself against any. The prince could not have thrown me down, if my horse had not reared."

"There will be knights here better than you are."

Here the noblemen began to shout:

"For heaven's sake! Here, in the presence of the queen, will fight not such as you, but only the most famous knights in the world. Here will fight Zawisza of Garbow and Farurej, Dobko of Olesnica, Powala of Taczew, Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice, Jasko Naszan and Abdank of Gora, Andrzej of Brochocice, Krystyn of Ostrow, and Jakob of Kobylany! Can you measure your sword against the swords of those, with whom neither the knights here, nor of the Bohemian court, nor of the Hungarian court can compete? What are you talking

¹ An exclamation of trifling.

about? Are you better than they? How old are you?"

"Eighteen," answered Zbyszko.

"Everyone of them could crush you between his fingers."

"We will see."

But Macko said:

"I have heard that the king rewarded those knights munificently who returned from the Lithuanian war. Speak, you belong here; is it true?"

"Yes, it is true!" answered one of the nobles. "The king's munificence is known to the world; but it will be difficult to get near him now, because the guests are swarming to Krakow; they are coming to be in time for the queen's confinement and for the christening, wishing to show reverence to our lord and to render him homage. The king of Hungary is coming; they say the Roman emperor will be here also, and plenty of princes, counts and knights, will come because not one of them expects to return with empty hands. They even say that Pope Boniface, himself will arrive, because he also needs favor and help from our lord against his adversary in Avignon. Therefore in such a crowd, it will be difficult to approach the king; but if one would be able to see him and bow at his feet, then he will liberally reward him who deserves it."

"Then I will bow before him, because I have served enough, and if there is another war, I shall go again. We have taken some booty, and we are not poor; but I am getting old, and when one is old, and the strength has left his bones, one is pleased to have a quiet corner."

"The king was glad to see those who returned

from Litwa with Jasko of Olesnica ; and they feast well now."

"You see I did not return at that time; I was still at the war. You know that the Germans have suffered because of that reconciliation between the king and *Kniaz* Witold. The prince cunningly got the hostages back, and then rushed against the Germans! He ruined and burned the castle and slaughtered the knights and a great many of the people. The Germans wanted revenge, as did also Swidrygello, who went to them. There was again a great expedition started. The grand master Kondrat himself went with a great army; they besieged Wilno, and tried from their towers to ruin the castles; they also tried to capture the city by treachery—but they did not succeed! While retreating there were so many killed, that even half of them did not escape. Then we attacked Ulrich von Jungingen, the grand master's brother, who is bailiff in Swabja. But the bailiff was afraid of the *kniaz* and ran away. On account of this flight there is peace, and they are rebuilding the city. One pious monk, who could walk with bare feet on hot iron, has prophesied since that time, that as long as the world exists, no German soldier will be seen under the walls of Wilno. And if that be so, then whose hands have done it?"

Having said this, Macko of Bogdaniec, extended his palms, broad and enormous; the others began to nod and to approve:

"Yes, yes! It's true what he says! Yes!"

But further conversation was interrupted by a noise entering through the windows from which the bladders had been taken out, because the night was warm and clear. From afar thrumming, sing-

ing, laughing and the snorting of horses were heard. They were surprised because it was quite late. The host rushed to the yard of the inn, but before the guests were able to drink their beer to the last drop, he returned shouting :

“Some court is coming !”

A moment afterward, in the door appeared a footman dressed in a blue jacket and wearing a red folding cap. He stopped, glanced at the guests, and then having perceived the host, he said :

“Wipe the tables and prepare lights ; the princess, Anna Danuta, will stop here to-night.”

Having said this, he withdrew. In the inn a great commotion began ; the host called his servants, and the guests looked at one another with great surprise.

“Princess Anna Danuta,” said one of the townsmen, “she is Kiejstutowna,¹ Janusz Mazowiecki’s wife. She was in Krakow two weeks, but she went to Zator to visit Prince Wacław, and now she is coming back.”

“Uncle Gamroth,” said the other townsman, “let us go to the barn and sleep on the hay ; the company is too high for us.”

“I don’t wonder they are traveling during the night,” said Macko, “because the days are very warm ; but why do they come to the inn when the monastery is so near ?”

Here he turned toward Zbyszko :

“The beautiful Ryngalla’s own sister ; do you understand ?”

And Zbyszko answered :

“There must be many Mazovian ladies with her, hej !”

¹ Prince Kiejstut’s daughter,

CHAPTER II.

AT that moment the princess entered. She was a middle-aged lady with a smiling face, dressed in a red mantle and light green dress with a golden girdle around her hips. The princess was followed by the ladies of the court; some not yet grown up, some of them older; they had pink and lilac wreaths on their heads, and the majority of them had lutes in their hands. Some of them carried large bunches of fresh flowers, evidently plucked by the roadside. The room was soon filled, because the ladies were followed by some courtiers and young pages. All were lively, with mirth on their faces, talking loudly or humming as if they were intoxicated with the beauty of the night. Among the courtiers, there were two *rybals*; ¹ one had a lute and the other had a *gensla* ² at his girdle. One of the girls who was very young, perhaps twelve years old, carried behind the princess a very small lute ornamented with brass nails.

"May Jesus Christ be praised!" said the princess, standing in the centre of the room.

"For ages and ages, amen!" answered those present, in the meanwhile saluting very profoundly.

"Where is the host?"

The German having heard the call, advanced to the front and kneeled, in the German fashion, on one knee.

"We are going to stop here and rest," said the lady. "Only be quick, because we are hungry."

¹ Slave minstrels.

² A kind of guitar.

The townsmen had already gone ; now the two noblemen, and with them Macko of Bogdaniec and young Zbyszko, bowed again, intending to leave the room, as they did not wish to interfere with the court.

But the princess detained them.

" You are noblemen ; you do not intrude, you are acquainted with courtiers. From where has God conducted you ? "

Then they mentioned their names,¹ their coats of arms, their nicknames and the estates from which they received their names. The lady having heard from *wlodyka*² Macko that he had been to Wilno, clapped her hands, and said :

" How well it has happened ! Tell us about Wilno and about my brother and sister. Is Prince Witold coming for the queen's confinement and for the christening ? "

" He would like to, but does not know whether he will be able to do so ; therefore he sent a silver

¹The names of the noblemen of every country are derived from the estates which they possess—hence the particles before the name of a true nobleman : *de* in France, for instance, *de* Nevers, means that the name comes from the place called Nevers ; *of* in England, for instance, Duke of Manchester ; *von* in Germany has the same signification ; in Poland *z*, for instance Macko *z* Bogdanca—means that the estate Bogdaniec belonged to his family and to him ;—in the following centuries the *z* was changed to *ski*, put on the end of the name and instead of writing *z* Bogdanca, a man of the same family was called Bogdanski ; but it does not follow that every Pole, whose name ends in *ski* is a nobleman. Therefore the translation of that particular *z* into English *of* is only strictly correct, although in other cases *z* should be translated into English *from* : to write : Baron *de* Rothschild is absurd and ridiculous, because the sign " red shield " was not an estate, and one cannot put *de* before it.

²A wealthy possessor of land—they were freemen and had serfs working for them—some of them were noblemen, and had the right to use coats of arms.

cradle to the queen for a present. My nephew and I brought that cradle."

"Then the cradle is here? I would like to see it! All silver?"

"All silver; but it is not here. The Basilians took it to Krakow."

"And what are you doing in Tyniec?"

"We returned here to see the procurator of the monastery who is our relative, in order to deposit with the worthy monks, that with which the war has blessed us and that which the prince gave us for a present."

"Then God gave you good luck and valuable booty? But tell me why my brother is uncertain whether he will come?"

"Because he is preparing an expedition against the Tartars."

"I know it; but I am grieved that the queen did not prophesy a happy result for that expedition, and everything she predicts is always fulfilled."

Macko smiled.

"Ej, our lady is a prophetess, I cannot deny; but with Prince Witold, the might of our knight-hood will go, splendid men, against whom nobody is able to contend."

"Are you not going?"

"No, I was sent with the cradle, and for five years I have not taken off my armor," answered Macko, showing the furrows made by the cuirass on his reindeer jacket; "but let me rest, then I will go, or if I do not go myself then I will send this youth, my nephew, Zbyszko, to Pan¹ Spytko of Melsztyn, under whose command all our knights will go."

¹ Pan—Lord

Princess Danuta glanced at Zbyszko's beautiful figure; but further conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a monk from the monastery, who having greeted the princess, began to humbly reproach her, because she had not sent a courier with the news that she was coming, and because she had not stopped at the monastery, but in an ordinary inn which was not worthy of her majesty. There are plenty of houses and buildings in the monastery where even an ordinary man will find hospitality, and royalty is still more welcome, especially the wife of that prince from whose ancestors and relatives, the abbey had experienced so many benefits.

But the princess answered mirthfully :

"We came here only to stretch our limbs ; in the morning we must be in Krakow. We sleep during the day and we travel during the night, because it is cooler. As the roosters were crowing, I did not wish to awaken the pious monks, especially with such a company which thinks more about singing and dancing than about repose."

But when the monk still insisted, she added :

"No. We will stay here. We will spend the time well in singing lay songs, but we will come to the church for matins in order to begin the day with God."

"There will be a mass for the welfare of the gracious prince and the gracious princess," said the monk.

"The prince, my husband, will not come for four or five days."

"The Lord God will be able to grant happiness even from afar, and in the meanwhile let us poor

monks at least bring some wine from the monastery."

"We will gladly repay," said the princess.

When the monk went out, she called:

"Hej, Danusia! Danusia! Mount the bench and make our hearts merry with the same song you sang in Zator."

Having heard this, the courtiers put a bench in the centre of the room. The *rybalks* sat on the ends, and between them stood that young girl who had carried behind the princess the lute ornamented with brass nails. On her head she had a small garland, her hair falling on her shoulders, and she wore a blue dress and red shoes with long points. On the bench she looked like a child, but at the same time, a beautiful child, like some figure from a church. It was evident that she was not singing for the first time before the princess, because she was not embarrassed.

"Sing, Danusia, sing!" the young court girls shouted.

She seized the lute, raised her head like a bird which begins to sing, and having closed her eyes, she began with a silvery voice:

"If I only could get
The wings like a birdie,
I would fly quickly
To my dearest Jasiek!"

The *rybalks* accompanied her, one on the *gensliks*, the other on a big lute; the princess, who loved the lay songs better than anything else in the world, began to move her head back and forth, and the young girl sang further with a thin, sweet childish voice, like a bird singing in the forest:

"I would then be seated
On the high enclosure :
Look, my dear Jasiulku,
Look on me, poor orphan."

And then the *rybalts* played. The young Zbyszko of Bogdaniec, who being accustomed from childhood to war and its dreadful sights, had never in his life heard anything like it; he touched a Mazur¹ standing beside him and asked :

"Who is she?"

"She is a girl from the princess' court. We do not lack *rybalts* who cheer up the court, but she is the sweetest little *rybalt* of them all, and to the songs of no one else will the princess listen so gladly."

"I don't wonder. I thought she was an angel from heaven and I can't look at her enough. What do they call her?"

"Have you not heard? Danusia. Her father is Jurand of Spychow, a *comes*² mighty and gallant."

"Hej! Such a girl human eyes never saw before!"

"Everybody loves her for her singing and her beauty."

"And who is her knight?"

"She is only a child yet!"

Further conversation was stopped by Danusia's singing. Zbyszko looked at her fair hair, her uplifted head, her half-closed eyes, and at her whole figure lighted by the glare of the wax candles and by the glare of the moonbeams enter-

¹A man coming from Mazowsze—the part of Poland round Warsaw.

²Count.

ing through the windows; and he wondered more and more. It seemed to him now, that he had seen her before; but he could not remember whether it was in a dream, or somewhere in Krakow on the pane of a church window.

And again he touched the courtier and asked in a low voice :

“Then she is from your court?”

“Her mother came from Litwa with the princess, Anna Danuta, who married her to Count Jurand of Spychow. She was pretty and belonged to a powerful family; the princess liked her better than any of the other young girls and she loved the princess. That is the reason she gave the same name to her daughter—Anna Danuta. But five years ago, when near Zlоторja, the Germans attacked the court,—she died from fear. Then the princess took the girl, and she has taken care of her since. Her father often comes to the court; he is glad that the princess is bringing his child up healthy and in happiness. But every time he looks at her, he cries, remembering his wife; then he returns to avenge on the Germans his awful wrong. He loved his wife more dearly than any one in the whole Mazowsze till now has loved; but he has killed in revenge a great many Germans.”

In a moment Zbyszko's eyes were shining and the veins on his forehead swelled.

“Then the Germans killed her mother?” he asked.

“Killed and not killed. She died from fear. Five years ago there was peace; nobody was thinking about war and everybody felt safe. The prince went without any soldiers, only with the

court, as usual during peace, to build a tower in Złotorja. Those traitors, the Germans, fell upon them without any declaration of war, without any reason. They seized the prince himself, and remembering neither God's anger, nor that from the prince's ancestor, they had received great benefits, they bound him to a horse and slaughtered his people. The prince was a prisoner a long time, and only when King Władysław threatened them with war, did they release him. During this attack Danusia's mother died."

"And you, sir, were you there? What do they call you? I have forgotten!"

"My name is Mikolaj of Długolas and they call me Obuch.¹ I was there. I saw a German with peacock feathers on his helmet, bind her to his saddle; and then she died from fear. They cut me with a halberd from which I have a scar."

Having said this he showed a deep scar on his head coming from beneath his hair to his eyebrows.

There was a moment of silence. Zbyszko was again looking at Danusia. Then he asked:

"And you said, sir, that she has no knight?"

But he did not receive any answer, because at that moment the singing stopped. One of the *ry-balls*, a fat and heavy man, suddenly rose, and the bench tilted to one side. Danusia tottered and stretched out her little hands, but before she could fall or jump, Zbyszko rushed up like a wild-cat and seized her in his arms.

The princess, who at first screamed from fear, laughed immediately and began to shout:

"Here is Danusia's knight! Come, little knight and give us back our dear little girl!"

¹ Back side of the axe.

"He grasped her boldly," some among the courtiers were heard to say.

Zbyszko walked toward the princess, holding Danusia to his breast, who having encircled his neck with one arm, held the lute with the other, being afraid it would be broken. Her face was smiling and pleased, although a little bit frightened.

In the meanwhile the youth came near the princess, put Danusia before her, kneeled, raised his head and said with remarkable boldness for his age :

"Let it be then according to your word, my gracious lady ! It is time for this gentle young girl to have her knight, and it is time for me to have my lady, whose beauty and virtues I shall extol. With your permission, I wish to make a vow and I will remain faithful to her under all circumstances until death."

The princess was surprised, not on account of Zbyszko's words, but because everything had happened so suddenly. It is true that the custom of making vows was not Polish ; but Mazowsze, being situated on the German frontier, and often being visited by the knights from remote countries, was more familiar with that custom than the other provinces, and imitated it very often. The princess had also heard about it in her father's court, where all eastern customs were considered as the law and the example for the noble warriors. Therefore she did not see in Zbyszko's action anything which could offend either herself or Danusia. She was even glad that her dear girl had attracted the heart and the eyes of a knight.

Therefore she turned her joyful face toward the girl.

"Danusia! Danusia! Do you wish to have your own knight?"

The fair-haired Danusia after jumping three times in her red shoes, seized the princess by the neck and began to scream with joy, as though they were promising her some pleasure permitted to the older people only.

"I wish, I wish——!"

The princess' eyes were filled with tears from laughing and the whole court laughed with her; then the lady said to Zbyszko:

"Well, make your vow! Make your vow! What will you promise her?"

But Zbyszko, who preserved his seriousness undisturbed amidst the laughter, said with dignity, while still kneeling:

"I promise that as soon as I reach Krakow, I will hang my spear on the door of the inn, and on it I will put a card, which a student in writing will write for me. On the card I will proclaim that Panna Danuta Jurandowna is the prettiest and most virtuous girl among all living in this or any other kingdom. Anyone who wishes to contradict this declaration, I will fight until one of us dies or is taken into captivity."

"Very well! I see you know the knightly custom. And what more?"

"I have learned from Pan Mikolaj of Dlugolas that the death of Panna Jurandowna's mother was caused by the brutality of a German who wore the crest of a peacock. Therefore I vow to gird my naked sides with a hempen rope, and even though it eat me to the bone, I will wear it until I tear three such tufts of feathers from the heads of German warriors whom I kill."

Here the princess became serious.

"Don't make any joke of your vows!"

And Zbyszko added:

"So help me God and holy cross, this vow I will repeat in church before a priest."

"It is a praiseworthy thing to fight against the enemy of our people; but I pity you, because you are young, and you can easily perish."

At that moment Macko of Bogdaniec approached, thinking it proper to reassure the princess.

"Gracious lady, do not be frightened about that. Everybody must risk being killed in a fight, and it is a laudable end for a *wlodyka*, old or young. But war is not new nor strange to this man, because although he is only a youth, he has fought on horseback and on foot, with spear and with axe, with short sword and with long sword, with lance and without. It is a new custom, for a knight to vow to a girl whom he sees for the first time; but I do not blame Zbyszko for his promise. He has fought the Germans before. Let him fight them again, and if during that fight a few heads are broken, his glory will increase."

"I see that we have to do with a gallant knight," said the princess.

Then to Danusia, she said:

"Take my place as the first person to-day; only do not laugh because it is not dignified."

Danusia sat in the place of the lady; she wanted to be dignified, but her blue eyes were laughing at the kneeling Zbyszko, and she could not help moving her feet from joy.

"Give him your gloves," said the princess.

Danusia pulled off her gloves and handed them

to Zbyszko who pressed them with great respect to his lips, and said :

“ I will fix them on my helmet and woe to the one who stretches his hands for them ! ”

Then he kissed Danusia's hands and feet and arose. Then his dignity left him, and great joy filled his heart because from that time the whole court would consider him a mature man. Therefore shaking Danusia's gloves, he began to shout, half mirthfully, half angrily :

“ Come, you dog-brothers with peacock's crests, come ! ”

But at that moment the same monk who had been there before entered the inn, and with him two superior ones. The servants of the monastery carried willow baskets which contained bottles of wine and some tidbits. The monks greeted the princess and again reproached her because she had not gone directly to the abbey. She explained to them again, that having slept during the day, she was traveling at night for coolness ; therefore she did not need any sleep ; and as she did not wish to awaken the worthy abbot nor the respectable monks, she preferred to stop in an inn to stretch her limbs.

After many courteous words, it was finally agreed, that after matins and mass in the morning, the princess with her court would breakfast and rest in the monastery. The affable monks also invited the Mazurs, the two noblemen and Macko of Bogdaniec who intended to go to the abbey to deposit his wealth acquired in the war and increased by Witold's munificent gift. This treasure was destined to redeem Bogdaniec from his pledge. But the young Zbyszko did not hear the invitation, because

he had rushed to his wagon which was guarded by his servants, to procure better apparel for himself. He ordered his chests carried to a room in the inn and there he began to dress. At first he hastily combed his hair and put it in a silk net ornamented with amber beads, and in the front with real pearls. Then he put on a "*jaka*" of white silk embroidered with golden griffins; he girded himself with a golden belt from which was hanging a small sword in an ivory scabbard ornamented with gold. Everything was new, shining and unspotted with blood, although it had been taken as booty from a Fryzjan knight who served with the Knights of the Cross. Then Zbyszko put on beautiful trousers, one part having red and green stripes, the other part, yellow and purple, and both ended at the top like a checkered chessboard. After that he put on red shoes with long points. Fresh and handsome he went into the room.

In fact, as he stood in the door, his appearance made a great impression. The princess seeing now what a handsome knight had vowed to Danusia, was still more pleased. Danusia jumped toward him like a gazelle. But either the beauty of the young man or the sounds of admiration from the courtiers, caused her to pause before she reached him, drop her eyes suddenly and blush and confused, begin to wring her fingers.

After her, came the others; the princess herself, the courtiers, the ladies-in-waiting, the *rybals* and the monks all wanted to see him. The young Mazovian girls were looking at him as at a rainbow, each regretting that he had not chosen her; the older ones admired the costly dress; and thus, a circle of curious ones was formed around him.

Zbyszko stood in the centre with a boastful smile on his youthful face, and turned himself slightly, so that they could see him better.

"Who is he?" asked one of the monks.

"He is a knight, nephew of that *wlodyka*," answered the princess, pointing to Macko; "he has made a vow to Danusia."

The monks did not show any surprise, because such a vow did not bind him to anything. Often vows were made to married women, and among the powerful families where the eastern custom was known, almost every woman had a knight. If a knight made a vow to a young girl, he did not thus become her fiancé; on the contrary he usually married another; he was constant to his vow, but did not hope to be wedded to her, but to marry another.

The monks were more astonished at Danusia's youth, and even not much at that, because in those times sixteen year old youths used to be castellans. The great Queen Jadwiga herself, when she came from Hungary, was only fifteen years old, and thirteen year old girls used to marry. At any rate, at that moment they were more occupied looking at Zbyszko than at Danusia; they also listened to Macko's words, who, proud of his nephew, was telling how the youth came in possession of such beautiful clothes.

"One year and nine weeks ago," said he, "we were invited by the Saxon knights. There was another guest, a certain knight, from a far Fryzjan nation, who lived there on the shores of a sea. With him was his son who was three years older than Zbyszko. Once at a banquet, that son began to taunt Zbyszko because he has neither moustache

nor beard. Zbyszko being quick tempered, was very angry, and immediately seized him by his moustache, and pulled out all the hair. On account of that I afterward fought until death or slavery."

"What do you mean?" asked the Pan of Dlugolas.

"Because the father took his son's part and I took Zbyszko's part; therefore we fought, in the presence of the guests, on level ground. The agreement was, that the one who conquered, should take the wagons, horses, servants and everything that belonged to the vanquished one. God helped us. We killed those Fryzes, although with great labor, because they were brave and strong. We took much valuable booty; there were four wagons, each one drawn by two horses, four enormous stallions, ten servants, and two excellent suits of armor which are difficult to find. It is true we broke the helmets in the fight, but the Lord Jesus rewarded us with something else; there was a large chest of costly clothing; those in which Zbyszko is now dressed, we found there also."

Now the two noblemen from the vicinity of Krakow, and all the Mazurs began to look with more respect on both the uncle and the nephew, and the Pan of Dlugolas, called Obuch, said:

"I see you are terrible fellows, and not lazy."

"We now believe that this youngster will capture three peacocks' crests."

Maeko laughed, and in his face there really appeared an expression similar to that on the face of a beast of prey.

But in the meanwhile, the servants of the monastery had taken the wine and the dainties from the willow baskets, and the servant girls were bringing

large dishes full of steaming boiled eggs, surrounded by sausage, from which a strong and savory smell filled the whole room. This sight excited everybody's appetite, and they rushed to the tables.

But nobody sat down until the princess was seated at the head of the table; she told Zbyszko and Danusia to sit opposite her and then she said to Zbyszko:

"It is right for you both to eat from one dish; but do not step on her feet under the table, nor touch her with your knees, as the other knights do to their ladies, because she is too young."

To this he answered:

"I shall not do it, gracious lady, for two or three years yet, until the Lord Jesus permits me to accomplish my vow, and then this little berry will be ripe; as for stepping on her feet, even if I would like to do it I can not, because they do not touch the floor."

"True," answered the princess; "but it is pleasant to see that you have good manners."

Then there was silence because everybody was busy eating. Zbyszko picked the best pieces of sausage, which he handed to Danusia or put directly into her mouth; she was glad that such a famous knight served her.

After they had emptied the dishes, the servants of the monastery began to pour out the sweet-smelling wine—abundantly for the men, but not much for the ladies. Zbyszko's gallantry was particularly shown when they brought in the nuts which had been sent from the monastery. There were hazel nuts and some very rare nuts imported from afar, called Italians; they all feasted so will-

ingly, that after awhile there was heard no sound in the whole room but the cracking of shells, crushed between the jaws. But Zbyszko did not think only about himself; he preferred to show to the princess and Danusia his knightly strength and abstinence. Therefore he did not put the nuts between his jaws, as the others did, but he crushed them between his fingers, and handed to Danusia the kernels picked from the shells. He even invented for her an amusement; after having picked out the kernel, he placed his hand near his mouth and, with his powerful blowing, he blew the shells to the ceiling. Danusia laughed so much, that the princess fearing that the young girl would choke, was obliged to ask him to stop the amusement; but perceiving how merry the girl was, she asked her:

"Well, Danusia, is it good to have your own knight?"

"Oj! Very!" answered the girl.

And then she touched Zbyszko's white silk "*jaka*" with her pink finger, and asked:

"And will he be mine to-morrow?"

"To-morrow, and Sunday, and until death," answered Zbyszko.

Supper lasted a long time, because after the nuts, sweet cakes with raisins were served. Some of the courtiers wished to dance; others wished to listen to the *rybalks* or to Danusia's singing; but she was tired, and having with great confidence put her little head on the knight's shoulder, she fell asleep.

"Does she sleep?" asked the princess. "There you have your 'lady.'"

"She is dearer to me while she sleeps than the others are while they dance," answered Zbyszko, sitting motionless so as not to awaken the girl.

But she was awakened neither by the *rybalts'* music nor by the singing. Some of the courtiers stamped, others rattled the dishes in time to the music; but the greater the noise, the better she slept.

She awoke only when the roosters, beginning to crow, and the church bell to ring, the company all rushed from the benches, shouting :

"To matins! To matins!"

"Let us go on foot for God's glory," said the princess.

She took the awakened Danusia by the hand and went out first, followed by the whole court.

The night was beginning to whiten. In the east one could see a light glare, green at the top, then pink below, and under all a golden red, which extended while one looked at it. It seemed as though the moon was retreating before that glare. The light grew pinker and brighter. Moist with dew, the rested and joyous world was awakening.

"God has given us fair weather, but there will be great heat," said the courtiers.

"No matter," answered the Pan of Dlugolas; "we will sleep in the abbey, and will reach Krakow toward evening."

"Sure of a feast."

"There is a feast every day now, and after the confinement and tournaments, there will be still greater ones."

"We shall see how Danusia's brave knight will acquit himself."

"Ej! They are of oak, those fellows! Did you hear what they said about that fight for four knights on each side?"

"Perhaps they will join our court; they are consulting with each other now."

In fact, they were talking earnestly with each other; old Macko was not very much pleased with what had happened; therefore while walking in the rear of the retinue, he said to his nephew:

"In truth, you don't need it. In some way I will reach the king and it may be he will give us something. I would be very glad to get to some castle or *grodek*¹—— Well we shall see. We will redeem Bogdaniec from our pledge anyhow, because we must hold that which our forefathers held. But how can we get some peasants to work? The land is worth nothing without peasants. Therefore listen to what I am going to tell you: if you make vows or not to anyone you please, still you must go with the Pan of Mielsztyn to Prince Witold against the Tartars. If they proclaim the expedition by the sound of trumpets before the queen's confinement, then do not wait either for the lying-in, or for the tournaments; only go, because there will be found some profit. Prince Witold is munificent, as you know; and he knows you. If you acquit yourself well, he will reward you liberally. Above all, if God help you, you will secure many slaves. The Tartars swarm in the world. In case of victory, every knight will capture three-score of them."

At this, Macko being covetous for land and serfs, began to fancy:

"If I could only catch fifty peasants and settle them in Bogdaniec! One would be able to clear up

A town surrounded with walls and having a peculiar jurisdiction or a kind of a castle.

quite a piece of forest. You know that nowhere can you get as many as there."

But Zbyszko began to twist his head.

"Owa! I will bring hostlers from the stables living on horse carrion and not accustomed to working on the land! What use will they be in Bogdaniec? Then I vowed to capture three German crests. Where will I find them among the Tartars?"

"You made a vow because you were stupid; but your vow is not worth anything."

"But my honor of *wlodyka* and knight? What about that?"

"How was it with Rynghalla?"

"Rynghalla poisoned the prince, and the hermit gave me absolution."

"Then in Tyniec, the abbot will absolve you from this vow also. The abbot is greater than a hermit."

"I don't want absolution!"

Macko stopped and asked with evident anger:

"Then how will it be?"

"Go to Witold yourself, because I shall not go."

"You knave! And who will bow to the king? Don't you pity my bones?"

"Even if a tree should fall on your bones, it would not crush them; and even if I pity you, I will not go to Witold."

"What will you do then? Will you turn *rybalt* or falconer at the Mazowiecki court?"

"It's not a bad thing to be a falconer. But if you would rather grumble than to listen to me, then grumble."

"Where will you go? Don't you care for Bogdaniec? Will you plow with your nails without peasants?"

"Not true! You calculated cleverly about the Tartars! You have forgotten what the Rusini¹ told us, that it is difficult to catch any prisoners among the Tartars, because you cannot reach a Tartar on the steppes. On what will I chase them? On those heavy stallions that we captured from the Germans? Do you see? And what booty can I take? Scabby sheep-skin coats but nothing else! How rich then I shall return to Bogdaniec! Then they will call me *comes*!"

Macko was silent because there was a great deal of truth in Zbyszko's words; but after a while he said:

"But Prince Witold will reward you."

"Bah, you know; to one he gives too much, to another nothing."

"Then tell me, where will you go?"

"To Jurand of Spychow."

Macko angrily twisted the belt of his leather jacket, and said:

"May you become a blind man!"

"Listen," answered Zbyszko quietly. "I had a talk with Mikolaj of Dlugolas and he said that Jurand is seeking revenge on the Germans for the death of his wife. I will go and help him. In the first place, you said yourself that it was nothing strange for us to fight the Germans because we know them and their ways so well. *Secundo*, I will thus more easily capture those peacock's crests; and *tercio*, you know that peacock's crests are not worn by knaves; therefore if the Lord Jesus will help me to secure the crests, it will also bring booty. Finally: the slaves from those parts

¹ Inhabitants of Rus'—part of Poland round Lwow—Leopol (Latin), Lemberg (German).





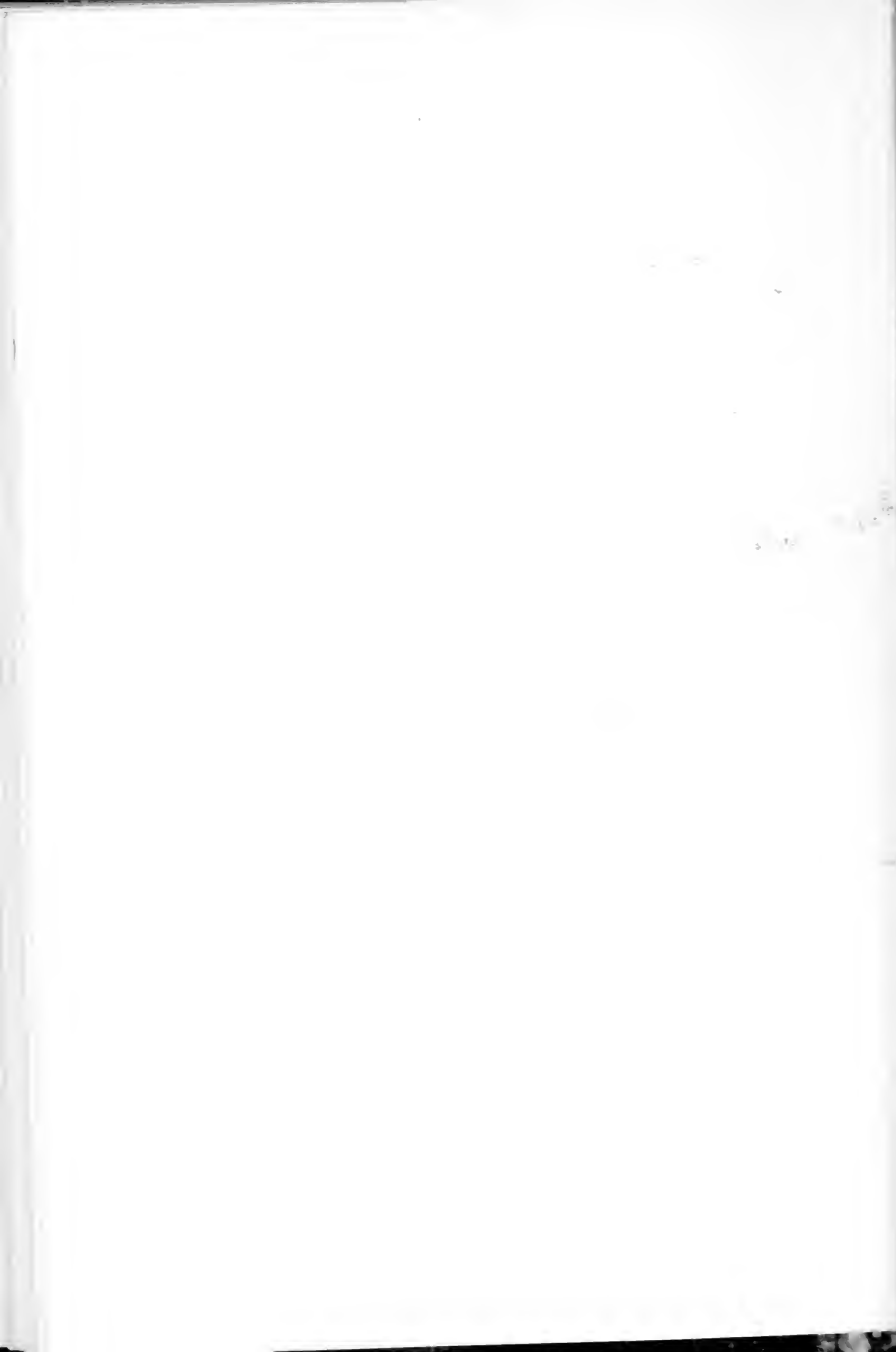
PRINCE ALBRECHT TAKING ALLEGIANCE T

(From the painting



THE KING OF POLAND, ZYGMUNT STARY

(Jan Monteiko)



are not like the Tartars. If you settle such slaves in a forest, then you will accomplish something."

"Man, are you crazy? There is no war at present and God knows when there will be!"

"How clever you are! The bears make peace with the bee-keepers and they neither spoil the beehives, nor eat the honey! Ha! ha! ha! Then it is news to you, that although the great armies are not fighting and although the king and the grand master stamped the parchment with their seals, still there is always great disturbance on the frontiers? If some cattle are seized, they burn several villages for one cow's head and besiege the castles. How about capturing peasants and their girls? About merchants on the highways? Remember former times, about which you told me yourself. That Nalencz, who captured forty knights going to join the Knights of the Cross, and kept them in prison until the grand master sent him a cart full of *grzywnien*;¹ did he not do a good business? Jurand of Spychow is doing the same and on the frontier the work is always ready."

For a while they walked along silently; in the meanwhile, it was broad daylight and the bright rays of the sun lighted up the rocks on which the abbey was built.

"God can give good luck in any place," Macko said, finally, with a calm voice; "pray that he may bless you."

"Sure; all depends on his favor!"

"And think about Bogdaniec, because you cannot persuade me that you go to Jurand of Spychow for the sake of Bogdaniec and not for that duck's beak."

¹ Money;—marks.

"Don't speak that way, because it makes me angry. I will see her gladly and I do not deny it. Have you ever met a prettier girl?"

"What do I care for her beauty! Better marry her, when she is grown up; she is the daughter of a mighty *comes*."

Zbyszko's face brightened with a pleasant smile.

"It must be. No other lady, no other wife! When your bones are old, you shall play with the grandchildren born to her and myself."

Now Macko smiled also and said:

"Grady! Grady!¹—May they be as numerous as hail. When one is old, they are his joy; and after death, his salvation. Jesus, grant us this!"

¹ Hail—the war-cry of the family, either because it was numerous like hail or struck sharply like hail.

CHAPTER III.

PRINCESS DANUTA, Macko and Zbyszko had been in Tyniec before ; but in the train of attendants there were some courtiers who now saw it for the first time ; these greatly admired the magnificent abbey which was surrounded by high walls built over the rocks and precipices, and stood on a lofty mountain now shining in the golden rays of the rising sun. The stately walls and the buildings devoted to various purposes, the gardens situated at the foot of the mountain and the carefully cultivated fields, showed immediately the great wealth of the abbey. The people from poor Mazowsze were amazed. It is true there were other mighty Benedictine abbeys in other parts of the country ; as for instance in Lubusz on Odra, in Plock, in Wielkopolska, in Mogila and in several other places ; but none of them could compare with the abbey in Tyniec, which was richer than many principalities, and had an income greater than even the kings of those times possessed.

Therefore the astonishment increased among the courtiers and some of them could scarcely believe their own eyes. In the meanwhile, the princess wishing to make the journey pleasant, and to interest the young ladies, begged one of the monks to relate the awful story about Walgierz Wdaly which had been told to her in Krakow, although not very correctly.

Hearing this, the ladies surrounded the princess

and walked slowly, looking in the rays of the sun like moving flowers.

"Let Brother Hidulf tell about Walgierz, who appeared to him on a certain night," said one of the monks, looking at one of the other monks who was an old man.

"Pious father, have you seen him with your own eyes?" asked the princess.

"I have seen him," answered the monk gloomily; "there are certain moments during which, by God's will, he is permitted to leave the underground regions of hell and show himself to the world."

"When does it happen?"

The old monk looked at the other monks and became silent. There was a tradition that the ghost of Walgierz appeared when the morals of the monastic lives became corrupted, and when the monks thought more about worldly riches and pleasures than was right.

None of them, however, wished to tell this; but it was also said that the ghost's appearance portended war or some other calamity. Brother Hidulf, after a short silence, said:

"His appearance does not foretell any good fortune."

"I would not care to see him," said the princess, making the sign of the cross; "but why is he in hell, if it is true as I heard, that he only avenged a wrong?"

"Had he been virtuous during his whole life," said the monk sternly, "he would be damned just the same because he was a heathen, and original sin was not washed out by baptism."

After those words the princess' brows contracted

painfully because she recollected that her father whom she loved dearly, had died in the heathen's errors also.

"We are listening," said she, after a short silence.

Brother Hidulf began thus:

During the time of heathenism, there was a mighty *grabia*¹ whose name was Walgierz, whom on account of his great beauty, they called Wdaly.² This whole country, as far as one can see, belonged to him, and he lead all the expeditions, the people on foot and a hundred spearmen who were all *wlodykas*; the men to the east as far as Opole, and to the west as far as Sandomierz, were his vassals. Nobody was able to count his herds, and in Tyniec he had a towerful of money the same as the Knights of the Cross have now in Marienburg."

"Yes, they have, I know it!" interrupted the princess.

"He was a giant," continued the monk. "He was so strong he could dig up an oak tree by the roots, and nobody in the whole world could compare with him for beauty, playing on the lute or singing. One time when he was at the court of a French king, the king's daughter, Helgunda, fell in love with him, and ran away with him to Tyniec, where they lived together in sin. No priest would marry them with Christian rites, because Helgunda's father had promised her to the cloister for the glory of God. At the same time, there lived in Wislica, Wislaw Piekny,³ who belonged to King Popiel's family. He, while Walgierz Wdaly was absent, devastated the county around Tyniec.

¹ Count.

² Wdaly—in old Polish—handsome.

³ Beautiful.

Walgierz when he returned overpowered Wislaw and imprisoned him in Tyniec. He did not take into consideration this fact: that every woman as soon as she saw Wislaw, was ready immediately to leave father, mother and even husband, if she could only satisfy her passion. This happened to Helgunda. She immediately devised such fetters for Walgierz, that that giant, although he could pluck an oak up by its roots, was unable to break them. She gave him to Wislaw, who took and imprisoned him in Wislica. There Rynga, Wislaw's sister, having heard Walgierz singing in his underground cell, soon fell in love with him and set him at liberty. He then killed Wislaw and Helgunda with the sword, left their bodies for the crows, and returned to Tyniec with Rynga."

"Was it not right, what he did?" asked the princess.

Brother Hidulf answered:

"Had he received baptism and given Tyniec to the Benedictines, perhaps God would have forgiven his sins; but he did not do this, therefore the earth has devoured him."

"Were the Benedictines in this kingdom at that time?"

"No, the Benedictines were not here; only the heathen lived here then."

"How then could he receive baptism, or give up Tyniec?"

"He could not; and that is exactly why he was sent to hell to endure eternal torture," answered the monk with authority.

"Sure! He speaks rightly!" several voices were heard to say.

In the meanwhile they approached the principal

gate of the monastery, where the abbot with numerous monks and noblemen, was awaiting the princess. There were always many lay people in the cloister: land stewards, barristers and procurators. Many noblemen, even powerful *wlodykas*, held in fief from the monastery numerous estates; and these, as "vassals," were glad to pass their time at the court of their "suzerain," where near the main altar it was easy to obtain some gift and many benefits. Therefore the "*abbas centum villarum*"¹ could greet the princess with a numerous retinue.

He was a man of great stature, with a thin, intelligent face; his head was shaved on the top with a fringe of grey hair beneath. He had a deep scar on his forehead, which he had evidently received during his youth when he performed knightly deeds. His eyes looked penetratingly from beneath dark eyebrows. He wore a monk's dress similar to that worn by the other monks, but over it he wore a black mantle, lined with purple; around his neck was a gold chain from which was hanging a gold cross set with precious stones. His whole figure betrayed a proud man, accustomed to command and one who had confidence in himself.

But he greeted the princess affably and even humbly, because he remembered that her husband belonged to the family of the princes of Mazowsze, from which came the kings, Wladyslaw and Kazimierz; and that her mother was the reigning queen of one of the most powerful kingdoms in the world. Therefore he passed the threshold of the gate, bowed low, and then having made the sign of the cross over Anna Danuta and over her court, he said:

¹ Abbot of a hundred villages.

"Welcome, gracious lady, to the threshold of this poor monastery. May Saint Benedictus of Nursja, Saint Maurus, Saint Bonifacius, Saint Benedictus of Aniane and also Jean of Tolomeia—our patrons living in eternal glory,—give you health and happiness, and bless you seven times a day during the remainder of your life."

"They would be deaf, if they did not hear the words of such a great abbot," said the princess affably; "we came here to hear mass, during which we will place ourselves under their protection."

Having said this she stretched her hand toward him, which he falling upon one knee, kissed in knightly manner. Then they passed through the gate. The monks were waiting to celebrate mass, because immediately the bells were rung; the trumpeters blew near the church door in honor of the princess. Every church used to make a great impression on the princess who had not been born in a Christian country. The church in Tyniee impressed her greatly, because there were very few churches that could rival it in magnificence. Darkness filled the church except at the main altar where many lights were shining, brightening the carvings and gildings. A monk, dressed in a chasuble, came from the vestry, bowed to the princess and commenced mass. Then the smoke from the fragrant incense arose, veiled the priest and the altar, and mounted in quiet clouds to the vaulted ceiling, increasing the solemn beauty of the church. Anna Danuta bent her head and prayed fervently. But when an organ, rare in those times, began to shake the nave with majestic thunderings, filling it with angelic voices, then the princess raised her eyes, and her face expressed,

beside devotion and fear, a boundless delight; and one looking at her would take her for some saint, who sees in a marvelous vision, the open heaven.

Thus prayed Kiejstut's daughter, who born in heathenism, in everyday life mentioned God's name just as everybody else did in those times, familiarly; but in the Lord's house she used to raise her eyes with fear and humility, toward his secret and unmeasurable power.

The whole court, although with less humility, prayed devoutly. Zbyszko knelt among the Mazurs, and committed himself to God's protection. From time to time he glanced at Danusia who was sitting beside the princess; he considered it an honor to be the knight of such a girl, and that his vow was not a trifle. He had already girded his sides with a hempen rope, but this was only half of his vow; now it was necessary to fulfill the other half which was more difficult. Consequently now, when he was more serious than when in the inn drinking beer, he was anxious to discover how he could fulfill it. There was no war. But amidst the disturbances on the frontier, it was possible to meet some Germans, and either kill them or lay down his own life.

He had told this to Macko. But he thought: "Not every German wears peacock or ostrich feathers on his helmet. Only a few among the guests of the Knights of the Cross are counts, and the Knights of the Cross themselves are only *comthurs*; and not every one of them is a *comthur* either. If there be no war, then years may pass before I shall get those three crests; I have not been knighted yet and can challenge only those who are not knights like myself. It is true I expect to receive

the girdle of a knight from the king's hands during the tournaments, which have been announced to take place during the christening, but what will happen then? I will go to Jurand of Spychow; he will help me kill as many *knechts*¹ as possible; but that will benefit me little. The *knechts* are not knights, with peacock feathers on their heads."

Therefore in his uncertainty, seeing that without God's special favor, he could do nothing, he began to pray:

"Jesus, grant a war between the Knights of the Cross and the Germans who are the foes of this kingdom and of all other nations confessing Your Holy Name. Bless us; but crush them who would rather serve the *starosta*² of hell, than serve you; they have hatred in their hearts against us, being angry because our king and queen, having baptized the Lithuanians, forbade them cut your Christian servants with the sword. For which anger punish them!"

"And I, Zbyszko a sinner, repent before you and from your five wounds beseech for help, that in your mercy you permit me to kill as soon as possible three Germans having peacock feathers on their morions. These crests I promised upon my knightly honor to Panna Anna Danuta, Jurand's daughter, and your servant."

"If I shall find any booty on those defeated Germans, I shall faithfully pay to holy church the tithe, in order that you also, sweet Jesus, may have some benefit and glory through me; and also that

¹ Ordinary German soldiers.

² A nobleman holding an estate of the Crown, with or without jurisdiction

you may know, that I promise to you with a sincere heart. As this is true, so help me, amen !”

But as he prayed, his heart softened under the influence of his devotions and he made another promise, which was that after having redeemed Bogdaniec from its pledge, he would give to the church all the wax which the bees could make during the whole year. He hoped that his Uncle Macko would not make any opposition to this, and that the Lord Jesus would be especially pleased with the wax for the candles, and wishing to get it, would help him sooner. This thought seemed to him so right, that joy filled his soul; and he was almost sure that his prayer would be heard and that the war would soon come, so that he could accomplish his vow. He felt such might in his legs and in his arms, that at that moment he would have attacked a whole army. He even thought that having increased his promises to God, he would also add for Danusia, a couple of Germans ! His youthful anger urged him to do it, but this time prudence prevailed, as he was afraid to exhaust God's patience by asking too much.

His confidence increased, however, when after mass and a long rest, he heard the conversation between the abbot and Anna Danuta.

The wives of the reigning kings and princes, both on account of devotion as well as on account of the magnificent presents, sent them by the Master of the Order, were very kindly disposed toward the Knights of the Cross. Even the pious Jadwiga, as long as she lived, restrained her husband's anger against them. Anna Danuta alone, having experienced dreadful wrongs from the knights hated them with her whole soul. There-

fore when the abbot asked her about Mazowsze and its affairs, she began to complain bitterly against the Order :

“ Our affairs are in a bad condition and it cannot be otherwise with such neighbors ! Apparently it is the time of peace ; they exchange ambassadors and letters, but notwithstanding all that nobody can be sure of anything. The one who lives on the borders of the kingdom, never knows when he goes to bed in the evening, whether he will awaken in fetters, or with the blade of a sword in his throat, or with a burning ceiling over his head. Neither oaths, nor seals, nor parchment will protect from treachery. Thus it happened at Zlotorja where during the time of peace, they seized the prince and imprisoned him. The Knights of the Cross said that our castle was a menace to them ; but the castles are repaired for defence not for an onset ; and what prince has not the right to build and repair in his own land ? Neither the weak nor the powerful can agree with the Order, because the knights despise the weak and try to ruin the mighty. Good deeds they repay with evil ones. Is there anywhere in the world another order which has received as many benefits from other kingdoms as the knights have received from Polish princes ? And how have they repaid ? With threats, with devastation of our lands, with war and with treachery. And it is useless to complain, even to our apostolic capital, because they do not listen to the Roman pope himself. Apparently they have sent an embassy now for the queen’s confinement and the expected christening, but only because they wish to appease the anger of this mighty king for the evil deeds they performed in Litwa.

But in their hearts they are always plotting means to annihilate this kingdom and the whole Polish nation."

The abbot listened attentively with approval and then said :

"I know that Comthur Lichtenstein came to Krakow at the head of the embassy ; he is very much respected in the Order for his bravery and intelligence. Perhaps you will see him here soon, gracious lady, because he sent me a message yesterday, saying that as he wished to pray to our holy relics, he would pay a visit to Tyniec."

Having heard this, the princess began to complain again :

"The people say—and I am sure rightly—that there will soon be a great war, in which on one side will be the kingdom of Poland and all the nations speaking a language similar to the Polish tongue, and on the other side will be all the Germans and the Order. There is a prophecy about this war by some saint."

"Bridget," interrupted the scholarly abbot ; "eight years ago she was canonized. The pious Peter from Alvastra and Matthew from Linköping have written her revelations, in which a great war has been predicted."

Zbyszko shuddered at these words, and not being able to restrain himself, asked :

"How soon will it be?"

But the abbot being occupied with the princess, did not hear, or probably did not wish to hear, the question.

The princess spoke further :

"Our young knights are glad that this war is coming, but the older and prudent ones speak thus :

'We are not afraid of the Germans, although their pride and power are great, but we are afraid of their relics, because against those all human might is powerless.' "

Here Anna Danuta looked at the abbot with fear and added in a softer voice :

"They say they have a true piece of the holy cross ; how then can one fight against them ? "

"The French king sent it to them," answered the abbot.

There was a moment of silence, then Mikolaj of Dlugolas, called Obuch, a man of great experience, said :

"I was in captivity among the Knights of the Cross ; I saw a procession in which they carried this great relic. But beside this, there are many other relics in the monastery in Oliva without which the order would not have acquired such power."

The Benedictines stretched their necks toward the speaker, and began to ask with great curiosity :

"Tell us, what are they ? "

"There is a piece of the dress of the Most Holy Virgin," answered the *wlodyka* of Dlugolas ; "there is a molar tooth of Marya from Magdala and branches from the bush in which God the Father revealed himself to Moses ; there is a hand of Saint Liberjus, and as for the bones of other saints, I cannot count them on the fingers of both hands and the toes of both feet."

"How can one fight them ? " repeated the princess, sighing.

The abbot frowned, and having thought for awhile, said :

"It is difficult to fight them, for this reason ; they

are monks and they wear the cross on their mantles; but if they have exceeded the measure of their sins, then even those relics will refuse to remain with them; in that case they will not strengthen the knights, but will take their strength away, so that the relics can pass into more pious hands. May God spare Christian blood; but, if a great war should come, there are some relics in our kingdom also which will succor us."

"May God help us!" exclaimed Zbyszko.

The abbot turned toward the princess and said:

"Therefore have confidence in God, gracious lady, because their days are numbered rather than yours. In the meanwhile, accept with grateful heart this box, in which there is a finger of Saint Ptolomeus, one of our patrons."

The princess extended her hand and kneeling, accepted the box, which she immediately pressed to her lips. The courtiers shared the joy of the lady. Zbyszko was happy because it seemed to him that war would come immediately after the Krakowian festivals.

CHAPTER IV.

It was in the afternoon that the princess left hospitable Tyniec and went toward Krakow. Often the knights of those times, coming into larger cities or castles to visit some eminent person, used to put on their entire battle armor. It is true it was customary to take it off immediately after they arrived at the gates; in fact it was the custom for the host himself to invite them to remove it in these words: "Take off your armor, noble lord; you have come to friends!" This entrance was considered to be more dignified and to increase the importance of the knight. To conform with this ostentatious custom Macko and Zbyszko took with them those excellent suits of armor and shoulder-bands—won from the conquered Fryzjan knights,—bright, shining and ornamented on the edges with a gold band. Mikolaj of Dlugolas, who had seen the world and many knights, and was very expert in judging war things, immediately recognized that the suits of armor had been made by a most famous armorer of Milan; armor which only the richest knights could afford; each of them being worth quite a fortune. He concluded that those Fryzes were mighty lords among their own people, and he looked with more respect on Macko and Zbyszko. Their helmets, although not common ones, were not so rich; but their gigantic stallions, beautifully caparisoned, excited envy and admiration among the courtiers. Macko and Zbyszko, sitting on very high saddles, could look down proudly at the whole court. Each held in his hand a long spear; each had a sword at

at his side and an axe at the saddlebow. For the sake of comfort they had left their shields in the wagons, but even without them, both men looked as though they were going to battle and not to the city.

Both were riding near the carriage, in which was seated the princess, accompanied by Danusia, and in front of them a dignified court lady, Ofka, the widow of Krystyn of Jarzombkow and the old Mikolaj of Dlugolas. Danusia looked with great interest at the two iron knights, and the princess, pulling from time to time the box with the relics of Saint Ptolomeus from her bosom, raised it to her lips.

"I am very anxious to see what bones are inside," said she, "but I will not open it myself, for I do not want to offend the saint; the bishop in Krakow will open it."

To this the cautious Mikolaj of Dlugolas answered:

"Ej, it will be better not to let this go out of your hands; it is too precious a thing."

"May be you are right," said the princess, after a moment of reflection; then she added:

"For a long time nobody has given me such pleasure, as this worthy abbot has by this present; and he also calmed my fears about the relics of the Knights of the Cross."

"He spoke wisely and well," said Macko of Bogdaniec. "At Wilno they also had different relics, and they wanted to persuade the guests that they were at war with the heathen. And what? Our knights noticed that if they could only make a blow with an axe, immediately the helmet gave way and the head fell down. The saints help—it would be

a sin to say differently—but they only help the righteous, who go to war justly in God's name. Therefore, gracious lady, I think that if there be another war, even if all Germans help the Knights of the Cross, we will overcome them, because our nation is greater and the Lord Jesus will give us more strength in our bones. As for the relics,—have we not a true particle of the holy cross in the monastery of Holy Cross?"

"It is true, as God is dear to me," said the princess. "But ours will remain in the monastery, while if necessary they carry theirs."

"No matter! There is no limit to God's power."

"Is that true? Tell me; how is it?" asked the princess, turning to the wise Mikolaj of Dlugolas; and he said:

"Every bishop will affirm it. Rome is distant too, and yet the pope rules over the whole world; cannot God do more!"

These words soothed the princess so completely that she began to converse about Tyniec and its magnificence. The Mazurs were astonished not only at the riches of the abbey, but also at the wealth and beauty of the whole country through which they were now riding. All around were many flourishing villages; near them were orchards full of trees, linden groves, storks' nests on the linden trees, and beneath the trees were beehives with straw roofs. Along the highway on both sides, there were fields of all kinds of grain. From time to time, the wind bent the still greenish sea of grain, amidst which shone like the stars in the sky, the blue heads of the flowers of the bachelor button, and the light red wild poppies. Far beyond the fields appeared the woods, black in the dis-

tance but bathed in sunlight; here and there appeared moist meadows, full of grass and birds flying round the bushes; then appeared hills with houses; again fields; and as far as one could see, the country appeared to flow not only with milk and honey but also with quiet and happiness.

"That is King Kazimierz' rural economy," said the princess; "it must be a pleasure to live here."

"Lord Jesus rejoices to see such a country," answered Mikolaj of Dlugolas; "and God's blessing is over it; but how can it be different; when they ring the bells here, there is no corner where they cannot be heard! And it is known that no evil spirit can endure the ringing of the bells, and they are obliged to escape to the forests on the Hungarian frontier."

"I wonder," said Pani Ofka, the widow of Krystyn of Jarzombkow, "how Walgierz Wdaly, about whom the monk was talking, can appear in Tyniec, where they ring the bells seven times a day."

This remark embarrassed Mikolaj for a moment, who after thinking, quietly said:

"In the first place, God's decrees are not well known; and then you must remember that every time he appears he has had special permission."

"At any rate, I am glad that we shall not pass the night in the monastery. I would die from fear if I saw such an infernal giant."

"Hej! I doubt it, because they say, he is very handsome."

"If he were very beautiful, I would not want a kiss from such a man, from whose mouth one could smell sulphur."

"I see that when the conversation is even about devils, you are still thinking about kisses."

At these words the princess, Pan Mikolaj and both *wlodykas* of Bogdaniec began to laugh. Danusia laughed also, following the example of the others. But Ofka of Jarzombkow turned her angry face toward Mikolaj of Dlugolas, and said:

"I should prefer him to you."

"Ej! Don't call the wolf out of the forest;" answered the merry Mazur; "the ghost often wanders on the high road, between Krakow and Tyniec, especially toward night; suppose he should hear you and appear to you in the form of a giant!"

"Let the enchantment go on the dog!" answered Ofka.

But at that moment Macko of Bogdaniec, who being seated on a high stallion, could see further than those who were in the carriage, reined in his horse, and said:

"O, as God is dear to me, what is it?"

"What?"

"Some giant of the forest is coming!"

"And the word became flesh!" exclaimed the princess. "Don't say that!"

But Zbyszko arose in his stirrups and said:

"It is true; the giant *Walgierz*; nobody else!"

At this the coachman reined in the horses, but not dropping the reins, began to make the sign of the cross, because he also perceived on an opposite hill the gigantic figure of a horseman.

The princess had risen; but now she sat down, her face changed with fear. Danusia hid her face in the folds of the princess' dress. The courtiers, ladies and *rybaltts*, who were on horseback behind the carriage, having heard the ill-omened name, be-

gan to surround the carriage. The men tried to laugh, but there was fear in their eyes; the young girls were pale; only Mikolaj of Dlugolas maintained his composure and wishing to tranquilize the princess, said:

"Don't be frightened, gracious lady. The sun has not yet set; and even if it were night, Saint Ptolomeus will manage Walgierz."

In the meanwhile, the unknown horseman, having mounted the top of the hill, stopped his horse and stood motionless. In the rays of the setting sun, one could see him very distinctly; his stature seemed greater than ordinary human dimensions. The space separating him from the princess' retinue was not more than three hundred steps.

"Why is he stopping?" asked one of the *rybalt*s.

"Because we stopped," answered Macko.

"He is looking toward us as if he would like to choose somebody," said another *rybalt*; "if I were sure he was a man and not an evil spirit, I would go and give him a blow on the head with the lute."

The women began to pray aloud, but Zbyszko wishing to show his courage to the princess and Danusia, said:

"I will go just the same. I am not afraid of Walgierz!"

Danusia began to scream: "Zbyszko! Zbyszko!" But he went forward and rode swiftly, confident that even if he did meet the true Walgierz, he could pierce him through and through with his spear.

Macko who had sharp sight, said:

"He appears like a giant because he is on the hill. It is some big man, but an ordinary one,

nothing else! Owa! I am going also, to see that he does not quarrel with Zbyszko."

Zbyszko, while riding was debating whether he should immediately attack with the spear, or whether first take a close view of the man standing on the hill. He decided to view him first, and immediately persuaded himself that it was the better thought, because as he approached, the stranger began to lose his extraordinary size. He was a large man and was mounted on a large horse, which was bigger than Zbyszko's stallion; yet he did not exceed human size. Besides that he was without armor, with a velvet cap shaped like a bell on his head; he wore a white linen dust cloak, from beneath which a green dress could be seen. While standing on the hill he was praying. Evidently he had stopped his horse to finish his evening devotions.

"It is not Walgierz," thought the boy.

He had approached so close that he could touch the unknown man with his spear. The man who evidently was a knight, smiled at him benevolently, and said:

"May Jesus Christ be praised!"

"For ages and ages."

"Is that the court of the Princess of Mazowsze below?"

"Yes, it is!"

"Then you come from Tyniec?"

But he did not receive any answer, because Zbyszko was so much surprised that he did not even hear the question. For a moment he stood like a statue, scarcely believing his own eyes, for, behold! about half a furlong behind the unknown man, he perceived several soldiers on horseback, at

the head of whom was riding a knight clad in full armor, with a white cloth mantle with a red cross on it, and with a steel helmet having a magnificent peacock tuft in the crest.

"A Knight of the Cross!" whispered Zbyszko. Now he thought that God had heard his prayers; that he had sent him the German knight for whom he had asked in Tyniec. Surely he must take advantage of God's kindness; therefore without any hesitation,—before all these thoughts had hardly passed through his head, before his astonishment had diminished,—he bent low on the saddle, let down his spear and having uttered his family shout: "Grady! Grady!" he rushed with the whole speed of his horse against the Knight of the Cross.

That knight was astonished also; he stopped his horse, and without lowering his spear, looked in front of him, uncertain whether the attack was against him or not.

"Lower your spear!" shouted Zbyszko, pricking his horse with the iron points of the stirrups.

"Grady! — Grady!"

The distance separating them began to diminish. The Knight of the Cross seeing that the attack was really against him, reined in his horse and poised his spear. At the moment that Zbyszko's lance was nearly touching his chest, a powerful hand broke it like a reed; then the same hand reined in Zbyszko's horse with such force, that the charger stopped as though rooted to the ground.

"You crazy man, what are you doing?" said a deep, threatening voice; "you are attacking an envoy; you are insulting the king!"

Zbyszko glanced around and recognized the same gigantic man, whom he had taken for Wal-

gierz, and who had frightened the princess and her court.

"Let me go against the German! Who are you?" he cried, seizing his axe.

"Away with the axe! for God's sake! Away with the axe, I say! I will throw you from your horse!" shouted the stranger more threateningly. "You have offended the majesty of the king and you will be punished."

Then he turned toward the soldiers who were riding behind the Knight of the Cross.

"Come here!"

"At this time Macko appeared and his face looked threatening. He understood that Zbyszko had acted like a madman and that the consequences of this affair might be very serious; but he was ready to defend him just the same. The whole retinue of the stranger and of the Knight of the Cross contained only fifteen men, armed with spears and crossbows; therefore two knights in full armors could fight them with some hope of being victorious. Macko also thought that as they were threatened with punishment, it would be better perhaps to avoid it, by overcoming these men, and then hiding somewhere until the storm had passed over. Therefore his face immediately contracted, like the jaws of a wolf ready to bite, and having pushed his horse between Zbyszko and the stranger's horse, he began to ask, meanwhile handling his sword:

"Who are you? What right have you to interfere?"

"My right is this," said the stranger, "that the king has intrusted to me the safety of the environs of Krakow, and they call me Powala of Taczew."

At these words, Macko and Zbyszko glanced at the knight, then returned to their scabbards the half drawn swords and dropped their heads, not because they were frightened but in respect for this famous and very well-known name. Powala of Taczew, a nobleman of a powerful family and a mighty lord, possessor of large estates round Radom, was at the same time one of the most famous knights in the kingdom. *Rybalts* sang about him in their songs, citing him as an example of honor and gallantry, praising his name as much as the names of Zawisza of Garbow and Farurej, Skarbek of Gora, Dobek of Olesnica, Janko Nanszan, Mikolaj of Moskorzowo, and Zandram of Maszkowic. At this moment he was the representative of the king, therefore to attack him was to put one's head under the executioner's axe.

Macko becoming cooler, said with deep respect :

"Honor and respect to you, sir, to your fame and to your gallantry."

"Honor to you also, sir," answered Powala; "but I would prefer to make your acquaintance under less serious circumstances."

"Why?" asked Macko.

Powala turned toward Zbyszko.

"What have you done, you youngster? You attacked an envoy on the public highway in the king's presence! Do you know the consequences of such an act?"

"He attacked the envoy because he was young and stupid; therefore action was easier for him than reflection," said Macko. "But you will not judge him so severely, after I tell you the whole story."

"It is not I who will judge him. My business is only to put him in fetters."

"How is that?" said Macko, looking gloomy again.

"According to the king's command."

Silence followed these words.

"He is a nobleman," said Macko finally.

"Let him swear then upon his knightly honor, that he will appear at the court."

"I swear!" exclaimed Zbyszko.

"Very well. What do they call you?"

Macko mentioned the name and the coat of arms of his nephew.

"If you belong to Princess Janusz' court, beg her to intercede for you with the king."

"We are not with her court. We are returning from Litwa, from Prince Witold. Better for us if we had never met any court! This misfortune has come from that."

Here Macko began to tell about what had happened in the inn; he spoke about the meeting with the princess and about Zbyszko's vow. Then suddenly he was filled with anger against Zbyszko, whose imprudence had caused their present dreadful plight; therefore, turning toward him, he exclaimed:

"I would have preferred to see you dead at Wilno! What have you done, you young of a wild boar!"

"Well," said Zbyszko, "after the vow, I prayed to the Lord Jesus to give me some Germans; I promised him a present; therefore when I perceived the peacock feathers, and also a mantle embroidered with a cross, immediately some voice cried within me: 'Strike the German! It is a miracle!' Well I rushed forward then; who would not have done it?"

"Listen," interrupted Powala, "I do not wish you any evil. I see clearly that this youngster sinned rather from youthful giddiness than from malice. I will be only too glad to ignore his deed and go forward as if nothing had happened. But I cannot do this unless that *comthur* will promise that he will not complain to the king. Beseech him; perhaps he also will pity the lad."

"I prefer to go before the courts, than to bow to a *Krzyzak!*"¹ exclaimed Zbyszko. "It would not be befitting my dignity as a *wlodyka*."

Powala of Taczew looked at him severely and said:

"You do not act wisely. Old people know better than you, what is right and what is befitting a knight's dignity. People have heard about me; but I tell you, that if I had acted as you have, I would not be ashamed to ask forgiveness for such an offence."

Zbyszko felt ashamed; but having glanced around, answered:

"The ground is level here. Instead of asking him for forgiveness, I would prefer to fight him on horseback or on foot, till death or slavery."

"You are stupid!" interrupted Macko. "You wish then to fight the envoy?"

Here he turned to Powala:

"You must excuse him, noble lord. He became wild during the war. It will be better if he does not speak to the German, because he may insult him. I will do it. I will entreat him to forgive. If this *comthur* be willing to settle it by combat, after his mission is over, I will meet him."

¹ Knight of the Cross in Polish.

"He is a knight of a great family; he will not encounter everybody," answered Powala.

"What? Do I not wear a girdle and spurs? Even a prince may meet me."

"That is true; but do not tell him that, unless he mentions it himself; I am afraid he will become angry if you do. Well, may God help you!"

"I am going to humiliate myself for your sake," said Macko to Zbyszko; "wait awhile!"

He approached the Knight of the Cross who had remained motionless on his enormous stallion, looking like an iron statue, and had listened with the greatest indifference to the preceding conversation. Macko having learned German during the long wars, began to explain to the *comthur* in his own language what had happened; he excused the boy on account of his youth and violent temper, and said that it had seemed to the boy as though God himself had sent the knight wearing a peacock tuft, and finally he begged forgiveness for the offence.

The *comthur's* face did not move. Calm and haughty he looked at Macko with his steely eyes with great indifference, but also with great contempt. The *wlodyka* of Bogdaniec noticed this. His words continued to be courteous but his soul began to rebel. He talked with increasing constraint and his swarthy face flushed. It was evident that in the presence of this haughty pride, Macko was endeavoring to restrain his anger.

Powala having noticed this, and having a kind heart, determined to help Macko. He had learned to speak German while seeking knightly adventures at the Hungarian, Burgundian and Bohemian courts, when he was young. Therefore he now

said in that language in a conciliatory but jesting tone :

" You see, sir, the noble *comthur* thinks that the whole affair is unimportant. Not only in our kingdom but in every country the youths are slightly crazy ; but such a noble knight does not fight children, neither by sword nor by law."

Lichtenstein touched his yellow moustache and moved on without a word, passing Macko and Zbyszko.

A dreadful wrath began to raise the hair under their helmets, and their hands grasped their swords.

" Wait, you scoundrel ! " said the elder *wlodyka* through his set teeth ; " now I will make a vow to you. I will seek you as soon as you have finished your mission."

But Powala, whose heart began to bleed also, said :

" Wait ! Now the princess must speak in favor of the boy ; otherwise, woe to him ! "

Having said this, he followed the Knight of the Cross, stopped him and for a while they talked with great animation. Macko and Zbyszko noticed that the German knight did not look at Powala so proudly as he had at them ; this made them still more angry. After a while, Powala returned and said to them :

" I tried to intercede for you, but he is a hard man. He said that he would not complain to the king if you would do what he requires."

" What ? "

" He said thus : ' I will stop to greet the Princess of Mazowsze ; let them come, dismount, take off their helmets, and standing on the ground with uncovered heads, ask my forgiveness.' "

Here Powala looked sharply at Zbyszko, and added :

" I know it will be hard for people of noble birth to do this ; but I must warn you, that if you refuse no one knows what you may expect,—perhaps the executioner's sword."

The faces of Macko and Zbyszko became like stone. There was silence.

" What then ? " asked Powala.

Zbyszko answered quietly and with great dignity as though during this conversation he had grown twenty years older :

" Well, God's might is over all ! "

" What do you mean ? "

" I mean, that even if I had two heads and the executioner was going to cut off both, still I have only one honor which I will not stain."

Powala became grave and turning toward Macko, asked :

" And what do you say ? "

" I say," answered Macko gloomily, " that I reared this youth from childhood. On him depends our family, because I am old ; but he cannot do what the German asks, even if he must perish."

Here his grim face began to quiver and finally his love for his nephew burst forth with such strength, that he seized the boy in his arms, and began to shout :

" Zbyszku ! Zbyszku ! " ¹

The young knight was surprised and having returned his uncle's embrace, said :

" Aj ! I did not know that you loved me so much."

" I see that you are both true knights," said

¹ Vocative from Zbyszko.

Powala; "and as the young man has promised me upon his knightly honor, that he will appear at the court, I will not imprison him; one can trust such people as you. No more gloomy thoughts! The German intends to stay in Tyniec a day or two; therefore I will have an opportunity to see the king first, and I will try to tell him about this affair in such a way that his anger will not be aroused. I am glad I succeeded in breaking the spear in time, —great luck, I tell you!"

But Zbyszko said:

"Even if I had to lay down my life, I would like at least to have the satisfaction of breaking his bones."

"It surprises me that you who know how to defend your own honor, do not understand that you would thus disgrace our whole nation!" impatiently answered Powala.

"I understand it very well," said Zbyszko; "but I regret my disability just the same."

Powala turned toward Macko:

"Do you know, sir, that if this lad succeeds in escaping the penalty for his offence, then you ought to put a cowl like a hawk's on his head! Otherwise he will not die a natural death."

"He will escape if you, sir, will not say anything to the king about the occurrence."

"And what shall we do with the German? We cannot tie his tongue."

"That is true! That is true!"

Talking thus, they went back toward the princess' retinue. Powala's servants followed them. From afar one could see amidst the Mazovian caps, the quivering peacock feathers of the Knight of the Cross and his bright helmet shining in the sun.

"Strange is the nature of a *Krzyzak*," said the knight of Taczew. "When a *Krzyzak* is in a tight place, he will be as forbearing as a Franciscan monk, as humble as a lamb and as sweet as honey; in fact, it would be difficult to find a better man. But let him feel power behind him; then nobody will be more arrogant and merciless. It is evident that God gave them stones for hearts. I have seen many different nations and I have often witnessed a true knight spare another who was weaker, saying to himself; 'My fame will not increase if I trample this fallen foe.' But at such a time a *Krzyzak* is implacable. Hold him by the throat, otherwise woe to you! Such a man is that envoy! He wanted not only an apology, but also your humiliation. But I am glad he failed."

"He can wait!" exclaimed Zbyszko.

"Be careful not to show him that you are troubled, because then he would rejoice."

After these words they approached the retinue and joined the princess' court. The envoy of the *Krzyzaks*, having noticed them, immediately assumed an expression of pride and disdain; but they ignored him. Zbyszko stood at Danusia's side and began to tell her that from the hill one could see Krakow; at the same time Macko was telling one of the *rybals* about the extraordinary strength of the Pan of Taczew, who had broken the spear in Zbyszko's hand, as though it were a dry stem.

"And why did he break it?" asked the *rybalt*.

"Because the boy in fun attacked the German."

The *rybalt*, being a nobleman, did not consider such an attack a joke; but seeing that Macko spoke about it lightly, did not take it seriously either.

The German was annoyed by such conduct. He glanced at Macko and Zbyszko. Finally he realized that they did not intend to dismount and that they did not propose to pay any attention to him. Then something like steel shone in his eyes, and he immediately began to bid the princess adieu.

The Lord of Taczew could not abstain from deriding him and at the moment of departure he said to him :

“ Go without fear, brave knight. The country is quiet and nobody will attack you, except some careless child.”

“ Although the customs of this country are strange, I was seeking your company and not your protection,” answered Lichtenstein ; “ I expect to meet you again at the court and elsewhere.”

In the last words a hidden menace rang ; therefore Powala answered gravely :

“ If God will permit ”

Having said this, he saluted and turned away ; then he shrugged his shoulders and said in an undertone, but loud enough to be heard by those who were near :

“ Gaunt ! I could lift you from the saddle with the point of my spear, and hold you in the air during three *pater-nosters*.”¹

Then he began to talk with the princess with whom he was very well acquainted. Anna Danuta asked him what he was doing on the highway. He told her that the king had commanded him to keep order in the environs while there were so many wealthy guests going to Krakow. Then he told her about Zbyszko's foolish conduct. But

¹ Pater-noster—the Lord's prayer.

having concluded that there would be plenty of time to ask the princess to protect Zbyszko, he did not put any stress on the incident, not wishing to spoil the gaiety. The princess laughed at the boy, because he was so anxious to obtain the peacock tuft; the others, having learned about the breaking of the spear, admired the Lord of Taczew very much, especially as he did it with one hand only.

And he, being a little vain, was pleased because they praised him. Finally he began to tell about some of the exploits which made his name famous; especially those he performed in Burgundia, at the court of Philip the Courageous. There one time, during a tournament, he seized an Ardenian knight, pulled him out of the saddle and threw him in the air, notwithstanding that the knight was in full armor. For that exploit, Philip the Courageous presented him with a gold chain and the queen gave him a velvet slipper, which he wore on his helmet.

Upon hearing this, all were very much amazed, except Mikolaj of Dlugolas, who said:

"In these effeminate times, there are not such strong men as there were when I was young. If a nobleman now happens to shatter a cuirass, to bend a crossbow without the aid of the crank, or to bend a cutlass between his fingers, he immediately considers himself a very strong man. But in times of yore, girls could do such deeds."

"I don't deny that formerly there were stronger people," answered Powala; "but even now there are some strong men. God did not stint me in strength, but I do not consider myself the strongest in this kingdom. Have you ever seen Zawisza of Garbow? He can surpass me."

"I have seen him. He has shoulders broad like a rampart."

"And Dobko of Olesnica? Once at the tournament given in Torun by the Knights of the Cross, he defeated twelve knights for his own and our nation's glory."

"But our Mazur, Staszko Ciolek, was stronger, sir, than you or your Zawisza and Dobko. They say that he took a peg made from green wood in his hand and pressed the sap out of it."¹

"I can press the sap out myself," said Zbyszko. And before anyone could ask him to prove it, he broke a branch which he pressed so strongly, that really the sap began to ooze from it.

"Aj, Jesus!" exclaimed Ofka of Jarzombkow; "don't go to the war; it would be a pity if such an one should perish before his marriage."

"It would indeed be a pity!" replied Macko, suddenly becoming sorrowful.

But Mikolaj of Dlugolas laughed as did also the princess. The others, however, praised Zbyszko's strength, and as in those times might was appreciated more than any other quality, the young girls cried to Danusia: "Be glad!" She was glad although she could not then understand what benefit she would receive from that piece of compressed wood. Zbyszko having forgotten all about the *Krzyzak*, now looked so proud, that Mikolaj of Dlugolas wishing to curb his pride, said:

"There are better men than you; therefore do not be so proud of your strength. I did not see it, but my father was a witness of something more difficult which happened at the court of Charles, the Roman emperor. King Kazimierz went to

¹ Historical fact.

pay him a visit and with him went many courtiers. Among these courtiers was Staszko Ciolek, son of *Wojewoda*¹ Andrzej, who was noted for his strength. The emperor began to boast that he had a Czech who could strangle a bear. They had an exhibition and the Czech strangled two bears in succession. Our king not wishing to be outdone, said: 'But he cannot overcome my Ciolek.' They agreed that they should fight in three days' time. Many ladies and famous knights came, and the Czech and Ciolek grappled in the yard of the castle; but the contest did not last long; hardly had they come together before Ciolek broke the backbone of the Czech, crushed all his ribs, and left him dead to the great glory of the king.² They have called him since then *Lomignat*.³ Once he placed without help, a bell which twelve men could not move from its place."⁴

"How old was he?" asked Zbyszko.

"He was young!"

In the meantime, Powala of Taczew, while riding at the princess' right hand, bent toward her and told her the truth about the importance of Zbyszko's adventure, and asked her to speak to the king in Zbyszko's behalf. The princess being fond of Zbyszko, received this news with sadness and became very uneasy.

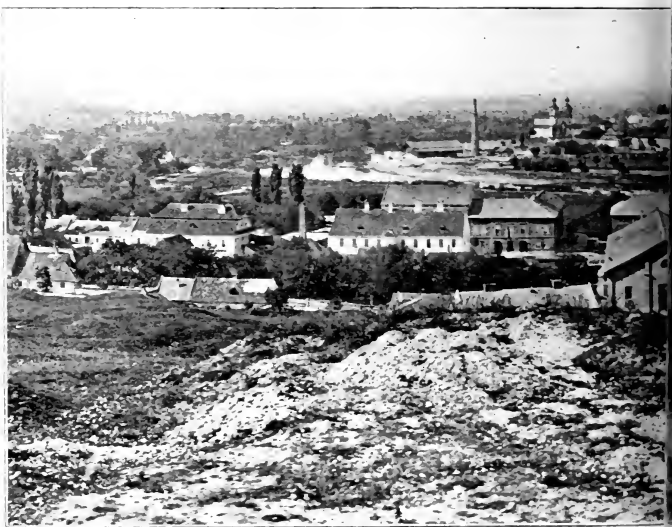
"The Bishop of Krakow is a friend of mine," said Powala; "I will ask him and also the queen to intercede; but the more protectors he has, the better it will be for the lad."

"If the queen will promise to say one word in

¹ A military title with jurisdiction—corresponding to general.

² Historical fact. ³ Bonebreaker. ⁴ Historical fact.

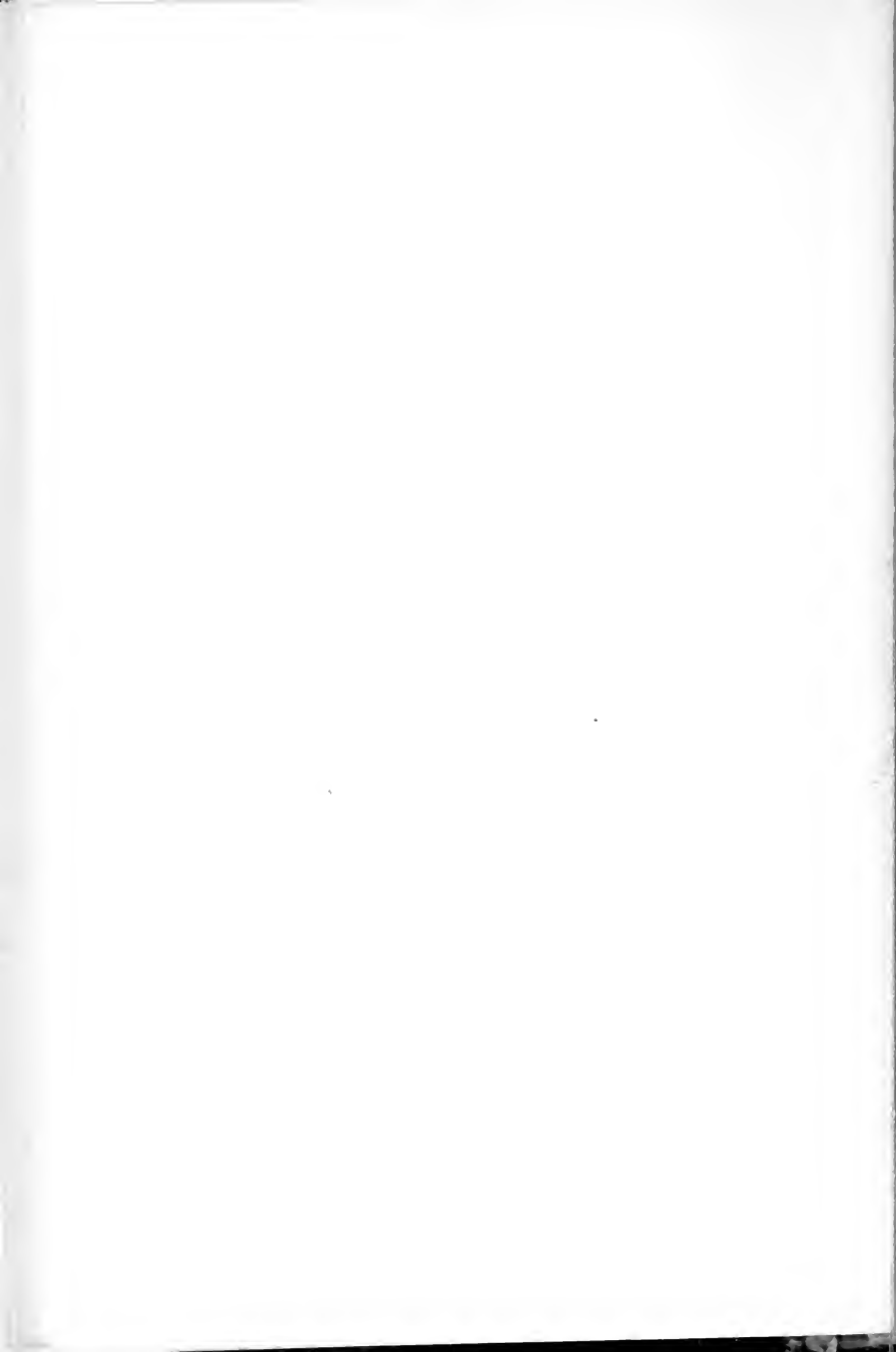




BIRDSEYE



OF KRAKOW



his favor, not a hair will fall from his head," said Anna Danuta; "the king worships her for her piety and for her dowry, and especially now, when the shame of sterility has been taken from her. But the king's beloved sister, Princess Ziemowit lives in Krakow; you must go to her. For my part I will do anything I can; but the princess is his own sister, and I am only his first cousin."

"The king loves you also, gracious lady."

"Ej, but not as much," she answered with a certain sadness; "for me a link, for her a whole chain; for me a fox skin, for her a sable. He loves none of his relations as dearly as he loves Alexandra."

Thus talking, they approached Krakow. The highway which was crowded on the road from Tyniec, was still more crowded here. They met countrymen going with their servants to the city, sometimes armed and sometimes in summer clothing and straw hats. Some of them were on horseback; some traveled in carriages, with their wives and daughters, who wished to see the long looked for tournaments. In some places the whole road was crowded with merchants' wagons which could not pass Krakow until the toll was paid. They carried in these wagons wax, grain, salt, fish, skins, hemp and wood. Others came from the city loaded with cloth, barrels of beer and different merchandise. One could now see Krakow very well; the king's gardens, lords' and burghers' houses surrounded the city; beyond them were the walls and the towers of the churches. The nearer they came to the city the greater was the traffic and at the gates it was almost impossible to pass.

"What a city! There is no other like it in the world," said Macko.

"It is always like a fair," answered one of the *rybalt*s; "how long since you were here, sir?"

"A very long time ago. I wonder at it just as much as if I saw it now for the first time, because we are returning from a wild country."

"They say that Krakow has grown very much since the time of King Jagiello."

This was true; after the grand duke of Litwa ascended the throne, enormous Lithuanian and Russian countries were opened for commerce; because of this the city had increased in population, richness and buildings, and had become one of the most important cities in the world.

"The cities of the Knights of the Cross are very beautiful also," said the larger *rybalt*.

"If only we could capture one of them," said Macko. "Worthy booty we could get!"

But Powala of Taczew was thinking about something else; namely, of Zbyszko, who was in peril because of his stupid blind fury. The Pan of Taczew, fierce and implacable in the time of war, had in his powerful breast, however, the heart of a dove; he realized better than the others what punishment awaited the offender; therefore he pitied him.

"I ponder and ponder," said he again to the princess, "whether to tell the king of the incident or not. If the *Krzyzak* does not complain, there will be no ease; but if he should complain, perhaps it would be better to tell the king everything beforehand, so that he will not become angry."

"If the *Krzyzak* has an opportunity to ruin somebody, he will do it," answered the princess; "but I will tell that young man to join our court. Perhaps the king will be more lenient to one of our courtiers."

She called Zbyszko, who having had his position explained to him, jumped from his horse, kissed her hands and became with the greatest pleasure one of her courtiers, not so much for greater safety, as because he could now remain nearer Danusia.

Powala asked Macko :

“Where will you stay?”

“In an inn.”

“There is no room in any inn now.”

“Then we will go to merchant Amylej; he is an acquaintance of mine, perhaps he will let us pass the night in his house.”

“Accept hospitality in my house. Your nephew can stay with the princess’ courtiers in the castle; but it will be better for him not to be near the king. What one does in the first paroxysm of anger, one would not do afterward. You will be more comfortable and safe with me.”

Macko had become uneasy because Powala thought so much about their safety; he thanked Powala with gratitude and they entered the city. But here they both as well as Zbyszko forgot for a while about danger in the presence of the wonders they saw before them. In Lithuania and on the frontier, they had only seen single castles, and the only city of any importance which they knew was Wilno, a badly built and ruined town; but here many of the merchants’ houses were more magnificent than the grand duke’s palace in Lithuania. It is true that there were many wooden houses; but even these astonished them by the loftiness of their walls and roofs; also by the windows, made of glass balls, set in lead which so reflected the rays of the setting sun, that one would imagine that there was fire in the houses. In the streets near the market

place, there were many highly ornamented houses of red brick, or of stone. They stood side by side like soldiers; some of them, broad; others, narrow; but all lofty with vaulted halls, very often having the sign of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ or an image of the Most Holy Virgin over the door. There were some streets, on which one could see two rows of houses, over them a stripe of blue sky, between them a road paved with stones; and on both sides as far as one could see stores and stores. These were full of the best foreign goods, at which being accustomed to war and the capture of booty, Macko looked with a longing eye. But both were still more astonished at the sight of the public buildings; the church of Panna Maryia on the square; the *sukiennice*;¹ the city hall with its gigantic cellar, in which they were selling beer from Swidnica; other churches, depots of broad-cloth, the enormous "*mercatorium*," devoted to the use of foreign merchants; then a building in which were the public scales, bath houses, cooper works, wax works, silver works, gold works, breweries, the mountains of barrels round the so-called Schrotanto,—in a word, riches which a man not familiar with the city, even though a well-to-do possessor of a *grodek*, could not even imagine.

Powala conducted Macko and Zbyszko to his house situated on Saint Anna Street, assigned a large room to them, recommended them to his shield-bearers, and then went to the castle, from which he returned for supper quite late at night.

A few friends accompanied him, and they enjoyed

¹ A large building which served for different purposes, but especially, as a depot of broad-cloth: in Polish *sukno*, hence its name *sukiennice*.

the plentiful repast of wine and meat. The host alone was sorrowful. When finally the guests departed, he said to Macko :

"I spoke to a canon, able in writing and in the law, who says, that an insult to an envoy is a capital offence. Therefore pray God, that the *Krzyzak* may not complain."

Hearing this, both knights, who, during the feast had exceeded the other guests in mirth, retired with sorrowful hearts. Macko could not even sleep and after a while when they were in bed, he said to his nephew :

"Zbyszku ?"

"What ?"

"I have considered everything and I do not think they will execute you."

"You do not think so?" asked Zbyszko, in a sleepy voice.

Having turned toward the wall, he fell sound asleep, because he was very weary.

The next day, both *wlodykas* of Bogdaniec, went with Powala to morning mass in the cathedral, for devotion and also to see the court and the guests who had arrived at the castle. In fact, on the way Powala met many acquaintances, and among them several knights famous at home and abroad. At these Zbyszko looked with admiration, promising himself that if he escaped death for the insult to Lichtenstein, he would try to rival them in gallantry and in all knightly virtues. One of these knights, Toporezyk, a relative of the castellan of Krakow, told them that Wojciech Jastrzembiec had returned from Rome, where he had been sent to Pope Bonifacius IX. with the king's invitation to the christening at Krakow. Bonifacius accepted the invitation ;

and although it was doubtful whether he would be able to come personally, he authorized the envoy to stand godfather for the coming child in his name; and he asked that the name Bonifacius or Bonifacia be given to the child as a proof of his particular love for the king and the queen.

They also spoke of the arrival of the Hungarian king, Sigismundus; they expected him positively, because he always came, invited or not, whenever there was an opportunity for feasts and tournaments. Of these he was very fond, because he desired to be famous the world over as a ruler, a singer and the first among knights. Powala, Zawisza of Garbow, Dobko of Olesnica, Naszan and others of the same rank, recollected with a smile that during Sigismundus' first visit, King Wladyslaw requested them privately not to attack him very fiercely, but to spare "the Hungarian guest," whose vanity, known throughout the world, used to make him cry in case of defeat. But the most interest was excited among the knights by Witold's affairs. They told marvelous tales about the magnificence of that cradle, made of sterling silver, which the Lithuanian princes and *bojars*¹ had brought as a present from Witold and his wife, Anna. Macko told about the proposed enormous expedition against the Tartars. The expedition was almost ready, and a great army had already gone eastward toward Rus'. If it were successful, it would extend the king's supremacy over almost half the world, to the unknown Asiatic countries, to the frontier of Persia and to the shores of the Aral. Macko, who formerly served under Witold and knew his plans, could tell about them so ac-

¹ Noblemen in Lithuania and Russia.

curately and even so eloquently, that before the bells were rung for mass, a large circle of curious people had formed around him. He said that the question was simply about a crusade. "Witold himself," he said, "although they call him a grand duke, rules over Litwa by Jagiello's authority; he is only viceroy, therefore the renown will be the king's. What fame it will be for the newly baptized Lithuanians and for the might of Poland, when the united armies carry the cross to those countries where, if they mention the Saviour's name at all, it is only to blaspheme! When the Polish and Lithuanian armies restore Tochtamysh to the throne of Kapchak, he will acknowledge himself "the son" of King Wladyslaw, and he has promised to bow to the cross with the whole Zlota Orda.

The people listened to Macko with great attention; but many did not thoroughly understand what people Witold intended to help nor against whom he intended to fight; therefore some one asked:

"Tell exactly with whom is the war to be?"

"With whom? With Tymur the Lame!" replied Macko.

There was a moment of silence. It is true the eastern knights often heard the names of Golden, of Blue, of Azovian and of other Ords; but they were not familiar with the civil wars of the Tartars. Nevertheless there was not one man in Europe, who had not heard about the terrible Tymur the Lame, or Tamerlan. This name was heard with no less fear than of old was the name of Attila. He was "lord of the world" and "lord of ages;" the ruler over twenty-seven conquered states; the ruler of Moskwenskoy Russia; ruler of Siberia and of China as far as the Indies; of Bagdad, of Ispahan,

of Alep, of Damascus—whose shadow was falling over the sands of Arabia, on Egypt, and on Bosphorus in the Greek empire; he was the exterminator of mankind; the terrible builder of pyramids composed of human skulls; he was the conqueror in all battles, never conquered in any, “lord of souls and of bodies.”

Tochtamysh had been placed by him on the throne of the Golden and the Blue Ords,¹ and acknowledged as “the son.” But when his sovereign authority extended from Aral to Crimea, over more lands than were in the rest of Europe, “the son” wanted to be an independent ruler. For this he was deposed from his throne with “one finger” of the terrible father; he escaped to the Lithuanian governor and asked him for help. Witold decided to restore him to his throne; but to do this it was necessary to vie with the world-ruling Tymur the Lame.

For these reasons his name made a great impression on the audience, and after a short silence, one of the oldest knights, Kazko of Jaglow, said:

“A difficult business!”

“And for a trifle,” said the prudent Mikolaj of Dlugolas. “What difference will it make to us, whether Tochtamysh or some Kutluk rules over the sons of Belial who dwell beyond the tenth-land?”

“Tochtamysh will turn to the Christian faith,” answered Macko.

“He will or he will not! Can you trust dog-brothers, who do not confess Christ?”

“But we are ready to lay down our lives for Christ’s name,” answered Powala.

¹The Tartars were divided into Ords—it was a fancy division, without any precise number.

"And for knightly honor," added Toporezyk, the relative of the castellan; "there are some among us however who will not go. The Lord *Wojewoda*, *Spytko of Melsztyn* has a young and beloved wife, but he has already joined *Kniaz Witold*."

"No wonder," added Jasko Naszan; "no matter how hideous a sin you have on your soul, pardon and salvation are sure for those who fight in such a war."

"And fame for ages and ages," said Powala of Taczew. "Let us then have a war, and it will be better if it be a great war. Tymur has conquered the world and has twenty-seven states under him. It will be an honor for our nation if we defeat him."

"Why not?" answered Toporezyk, "even if he possesses a hundred kingdoms, let others be afraid of him—not us! You speak wisely! Let us gather together ten thousand good spearmen, and we will pass round the world."

"And what nation should conquer The Lame, if not ours?"

Thus the knights conversed. Zbyszko was sorry now because he did not go with Witold to the wild steppes. But when he was in Wilno, he wanted to see Krakow and its court and take part in the tournaments; but now he fears that he will find disgrace here at the court, while there on the steppes even at the worst, he would have found a glorious death.

But the aged Kazko of Jaglow, who was a hundred years old, and whose common sense corresponded to his age, discouraged the zealous knights.

"You are stupid!" said he. "Is it possible

that none of you have heard that Christ's image spoke to the queen? If the Saviour himself condescend to such familiarity, then why will the Holy Ghost, who is the third person of the Trinity, be less kind to her. Therefore she sees future events, as if they were passing before her, and she has thus spoken: "

Here he stopped for a while, shook his head, and then said:

"I have forgotten what she prophesied, but I will soon recollect."

He began to think, and they waited silently, because the popular belief was that the queen could see the future.

"Aha!" said he, finally, "I remember now! The queen said, that if every knight went with Witold against The Lamé-Man, then heathenish power would be destroyed. But all cannot go because of the dishonesty of Christian lords. We are obliged to guard the boundaries from the attacks of the Czechs and the Hungarians and also from the attacks of the Order, because we cannot trust any of them. Therefore if Witold go with only a handful of Polish warriors, then Tymur the Lamé, or his *wojewodas*, coming with innumerable hosts, will defeat him."

"But we are at peace now," said Toporeczyk, "and the Order will give some assistance to Witold. The Knights of the Cross cannot act otherwise, if only for the sake of appearances, and to show to the holy father that they are ready to fight the pagans. The courtiers say that Kuno von Lichtenstein came not entirely for the christening, but also to consult with the king."

"Here he is!" exclaimed the astonished Macko.

"True!" said Powala, turning his head. "So help me God, it is he! He did not stay long with the abbot."

"He is in a hurry," answered Macko, gloomily.

Kuno von Lichtenstein passed them. Macko and Zbyszko recognized him by the cross embroidered on his mantle; but he did not recognize either of them because he had seen them before with their helmets on. Passing by, he nodded to Powala of Taczew, and to Toporeczyk; then with his shield-bearers, he ascended the stairs of the cathedral, in a majestic and stately manner.

At that moment the bells resounded, frightening flocks of doves and jackdaws, and announcing that mass would soon begin. Macko and Zbyszko entered the church with the others, feeling troubled about Lichtenstein's quick return. The older *wlodyka* was very uneasy, but the young one's attention was attracted by the king's court. He was surrounded by noted men, famous in war and in counsel. Many of those by whose wisdom the marriage of the grand duke of Lithuania with the young and beautiful queen of Poland, had been planned and accomplished, were now dead; but a few of them were still living, and at these, all looked with the greatest respect. The young knight could not admire enough the magnificent figure of Jasko of Tenczyn, castellan of Krakow, in which sternness was united with dignity and honesty; he admired the wise countenances of the counsellors and the powerful faces of the knights whose hair was cut evenly on their foreheads, and fell in long curls on their sides and backs. Some of them wore nets, others wore bands to keep the hair in order. The foreign guests, Hungarian and Aus-

trian, and their attendants, were amazed at the great elegance of the costumes; the Lithuanian princes and *bojars*, notwithstanding the summer heat, were dressed for the sake of pompous display in costly furs; the Russian princes wore large stiff dresses, and in the background they looked like Byzantine pictures. With the greatest curiosity Zbyszko awaited the appearance of the king and the queen. He advanced toward the stalls behind which he could see the red velvet cushions near the altar, on which the king and the queen kneeled during mass.

He did not wait long; the king entered first, through the vestry door, and before he reached the altar one could have a good look at him. He had long, dark, disheveled hair; his face was thin and clean shaven; he had a large pointed nose and some wrinkles around his mouth. His eyes were small, dark, and shining. His face had a kind but cautious look, like that of a man who having risen by good luck to a position far beyond his expectations, is obliged to think continually whether his actions correspond to his dignity and who is afraid of malicious criticism. This also was the reason why in his face and in his movements there was a certain impatience. It was very easy to understand that his anger would be sudden and dreadful. He was that prince, who being angered at the frauds of the Knights of the Cross, shouted after their envoy: "Thou comest to me with a parchment, but I will come to thee with a spear!"

But now this natural vehemence was restrained by great and sincere piety. He set a good example, not only to the recently converted Lithuanian princes, but even to the Polish lords, pious for gen-

erations. Often the king kneeled, for the greater mortification of the flesh, on bare stones; often having raised his hands, he held them uplifted until they dropped with fatigue. He attended at least three masses every day. After mass he left the church as if just awakened from slumber, soothed and gentle. The courtiers knew that it was the best time to ask him either for pardon, or for a gift.

Jadwiga entered through the vestry door also. Seeing her enter, the knights standing near the stalls, immediately kneeled, although mass had not begun, voluntarily paying her homage as to a saint. Zbyszko did the same; nobody in this assembly doubted that he really saw a saint, whose image would some time adorn the church altars. Besides the respect due to a queen, they almost worshipped her on account of her religious and holy life. It was reported that the queen could perform miracles. They said that she could cure the sick by touching them with her hand; that people who could not move their legs nor their arms, were able to do it, after they put on a dress which the queen had worn. Trustworthy witnesses affirmed that they had heard with their own ears, Christ speak to her from the altar. Foreign monarchs worshipped her on their knees and even the Order of the Knights of the Cross respected her and feared to offend her. Pope Bonifacius IX. called her the pious and chosen daughter of the church. The world looked at her deeds and remembered that this child of the Andegavian¹ house and Polish Piasts,² this daughter of the powerful Louis, a pupil

¹ Anjou in French.

² Piasts is family name—the first kings of Poland were Piasts.

of the most fastidious of courts, and also one of the most beautiful women on earth, renounced happiness, renounced her first love and being a queen married a "wild" prince of Lithuania, in order to bring to the cross, by his help, the last pagan nation in Europe. That which could not be accomplished by the forces of all the Germans, by a sea of poured out blood, was done with one word from her. Never did the glory of an apostle shine over a younger and more charming forehead; never was the apostleship united with equal self-denial; never was the beauty of a woman lighted with such angelic kindness and such quiet sadness.

Therefore minstrels sang about her in all the European courts; knights from the remotest countries came to Krakow to see this "Queen of Poland;" her own people loved her, as the pupil of the eye and their power and glory had increased by her marriage with Jagiello. Only one great sorrow hung over her and the nation; for long years this child of God had had no issue.

But now this sorrow had passed away and the joyful news of God's blessing on the queen sped like lightning from the Baltic to the Black Sea, also to Karpaty¹ and filled with joy all peoples of this powerful kingdom. In all foreign courts, except in the capital of the Knights of the Cross, the news was received with pleasure. In Rome "Te Deum" was sung. In the provinces of Poland the belief was firmly established, that anything the "Saint lady" asked of God, would be granted.

Therefore there came to her people to beseech her, that she ask health for them; there came en-

¹Mountains in Poland—sometimes improperly called Carpathian Mountains.

voys from the provinces and from other countries, to ask that she pray according to their need, either for rain, or for fair weather for harvesting; for lucky moving time; for abundant fishing in the lakes or for game in the forests.

Those knights, living in castles and *grodeks* on the frontier, who according to the custom learned from the Germans, had become robbers or waged war among themselves, at the command of the queen, put their swords in their scabbards, released their prisoners without ransom, restored stolen herds and clasped hands in friendship. All kinds of misery, all kinds of poverty crowded the gates of her castle in Krakow. Her pure spirit penetrated human hearts, softened the hard lot of the serfs, the great pride of the lords, the unjust severity of the judges, and hovered like a dove of happiness, like an angel of justice and peace, over the whole country.

No wonder then that all were awaiting with anxious hearts for the day of blessing.

The knights looked closely at the figure of the queen, to see if they could ascertain how long they would be obliged to wait for the future heir to the throne. The *ksiondz*¹ bishop of Krakow, Wysz, who was also the ablest physician in the country, and famous even abroad, had not announced when the delivery would occur. They were making some preparation; but it was the custom at that time to begin all festivals as early as possible, and to prolong them for weeks. In fact the figure of the lady, although a little rounded, had retained until now its former grandeur. She was dressed with excessive simplicity. Formerly, having been brought up at

¹ Priest—or prince in the old Slav language.

a brilliant court, and being more beautiful than any of the contemporary princesses, she was fond of costly fabrics, of chains, pearls, gold bracelets and rings; but now and even for several years past, she not only wore the dress of a nun, but she even covered her face, fearing that the thoughts of her beauty might arouse in her worldly vanity. In vain Jagiello, having learned of her condition, in a rapture of joy ordered her sleeping apartment to be decorated with brocade and jewels. Having renounced all luxury, and remembering that the time of confinement is often the time of death, she decided that not among jewels, but in quiet humility she ought to receive the blessing which God had promised to send her.

Meanwhile the gold and jewels went to establish a college and to send the newly converted Lithuanian youths to foreign universities.

The queen agreed only to change her monastical dress, and from the time that the hope of maternity was changed to positive certainty, she did not veil her face, thinking that the dress of a penitent was no longer proper.

Consequently everybody was now looking with love at that beautiful face, to which neither gold, nor precious stones could add any charm. The queen walked slowly from the vestry door toward the altar, with uplifted eyes, holding in one hand a book, in the other a rosary. Zbyszko saw the lily-like face, the blue eyes, and the angelic features full of peace, kindness and mercy, and his heart began to throb with emotion. He knew that according to God's command he ought to love the king and the queen, and he did in his way; but now his heart overflowed with a great love, which



THE ALTAR IN THE CATHEDRAL ON THE WAWEL, WHERE QUEEN JADWIGA
USED TO PRAY. SHE IS BURIED AT THE FOOT OF THIS ALTAR.



did not come by command, but burst forth like a flame; his heart was also filled with the greatest worship, humility and desire for sacrifice. The young *wlodyka* Zbyszko was impetuous; therefore a desire immediately seized him, to show in some way that love and the faithfulness of a knight; to accomplish some deed for her; to rush somewhere, to conquer some one and to risk his own life for it all. "I had better go with *Kniaz* Witold," he said to himself, "because how can I serve the holy lady, if there is no war here." He did not stop to think that one can serve in other ways as well as with sword or spear or axe: he was ready to attack alone the whole power of Tymur the Lame. He wanted to jump on his charger immediately after mass and begin something. What? He did not know himself. He only knew, that he could not hold anything, that his hands were burning and his whole soul was on fire.

He forgot all about the danger which threatened him. He even forgot about Danusia, and when he remembered her, having heard the children singing in the church, he felt that this love was something different. He had promised Danusia fidelity; he had promised her three Germans and he would keep his promise. But the queen is above all women. While he was thinking how many people he would like to kill for the queen, he perceived regiments of armors, helmets, ostrich feathers, peacocks' crests, and he felt that even that would be small in proportion to his desire.

He looked at her constantly, pondering with overflowing heart, how he could honor her by prayer, because he thought that one could not make an ordinary prayer for a queen. He could say:

Pater noster, qui es in coelis, sanctificetur nomen Tuum, because a certain Franciscan monk taught him this in Wilno; but it may be that the Franciscan himself did not know more; it may be that Zbyszko had forgotten; but it is certain that he could not recite the whole "Our Father." But now he began to repeat these few words which in his soul had the following meaning: "Give our beloved lady good health, long life and great happiness; care for her more than for anyone else."

As this was repeated by a man over whose head punishment was suspended, therefore there was no more sincere prayer in the whole church.

CHAPTER V.

AFTER mass Zbyszko thought that if he could only fall upon his knees before the queen and kiss her feet, then he did not care what happened afterward. But after the first mass, the queen went to her apartments. Usually she did not take any nourishment until noontime, and was not present at the merry breakfast, during which jugglers and fools appeared for the amusement of the king. The old *wlodyka* of Dlugolas came and summoned Zbyszko to the princess.

"You will serve Danusia and me at the table as my courtier," said the princess. "It may happen that you will please the king by some facetious word or deed, and the Krzyzak if he recognize you, will not complain to the king, seeing that you serve me at the king's table."

Zbyszko kissed the princess' hand. Then he turned to Danusia; and although he was more accustomed to battles than to the manners of the court, still he evidently knew what was befitting a knight, when he sees the lady of his thoughts in the morning; he retreated, and assuming an expression of surprise, and making the sign of the cross, exclaimed:

"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost!"

Danusia, looking at him with her blue eyes, asked:

"Why do you make the sign of the cross, Zbyszko, after mass is ended?"

"Because your beauty increased so much during last night, that I am astonished!"

Mikolaj of Dlugolas, who did not like the new, foreign customs of chivalry, shrugged his shoulders and said :

"Don't lose time talking to her about her beauty! She is only a bush hardly grown up from the soil."

At this Zbyszko looked at him with rancor.

"You must be careful about calling her a 'bush,'" said he, turning pale with anger; "if you were younger, I would challenge you immediately and would fight until either you or I were dead!"

"Keep quiet, you beardless boy! I can manage you even to-day!"

"Be quiet!" said the princess. "Instead of thinking about your own danger, you are seeking a quarrel! I would prefer to find a more steady knight for Danusia. If you wish to foam, go where you please; but we do not need you here."

Zbyszko felt abashed at the princess' words and began to apologize. But he thought to himself that if Pan Mikolaj of Dlugolas had a grown-up son, then sometime he would challenge the son and would not forgive Mikolaj for calling her "bush." Now he determined to be quiet while in the king's castle and not to provoke anybody, only in case of absolute necessity.

The blowing of horns announced that breakfast was ready; therefore the Princess Anna taking Danusia by the hand, went to the king's apartments, where the lay-dignitaries and the knights, stood awaiting her arrival. Princess Ziemowita entered first, because being the king's sister, she occupied a higher seat at the table. Soon the hall was filled

with guests, dignitaries and knights. The king was seated at the upper end of the table, having near him Wojciech Jastrzembiec, bishop of Krakow; the bishop, although inferior in rank to the other priests wearing mitres, was seated at the right hand of the king because he was the pope's envoy. The two princesses took the next places. Near Anna Danuta, the former archbishop of Gniezno, Jan, was comfortably seated in a large chair. He was a descendant of the Piasts of Szlonsk and the son of Bolko, Prince of Opole. Zbyszko had heard of him at the court of Witold; and now while standing behind the princess and Danusia, he recognized the archbishop by his abundant hair which being curled, made his head look like a *kropidlo*.¹ At the courts of the Polish princes, they called him "Kropidlo," for this reason; and the Knights of the Cross gave him the name of "Grapidla." He was noted for his gaiety and giddy manners. Having received the nomination for the archbishopric of Gniezno, against the king's wish, he took possession of it by military force; for this act he was deprived of his rank. He then joined the Knights of the Cross who gave him the poor bishopric of Kamieniec in Pomorze. Then he concluded that it was better to be friendly with the mighty king; he craved his pardon, returned to the country and was now waiting for a vacancy to occur, hoping that the good-hearted lord would let him fill it. He was not mistaken as the future proved. In the meantime he was trying to win the king's heart by merry frolics. But he still liked the Knights of

¹ In Poland they use in the churches a sprinkling brush made of thin shavings of a certain wood—such a brush is called: "kropidlo."

the Cross. Even now, at the court of Jagiello where he was not greatly welcomed by the dignitaries and knights, he sought Lichtenstein's company and gladly sat beside him at the table.

Zbyszko, standing behind the princess' chair, was so near to the Krzyzak, Lichtenstein, that he could have touched him with his hand. In fact, his fingers began to twitch, but he overcame his impetuosity and did not permit himself any evil thoughts. But he could not refrain from looking eagerly at Lichtenstein's head and shoulders, trying to decide whether he would have a hard fight with him, if they met either during the war, or in single combat. He concluded that it would not be difficult to conquer the German. The Krzyzak's shoulder bones appeared quite large under his dress of grey broadcloth; but he was only a weakling compared with Powala or with Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice, or with both of the most famous Sulimczyks, or with Krzon of Kozięglowy or with many of the other knights, sitting at the king's table.

At these knights Zbyszko looked with admiration and envy; but his attention was also attracted by the actions of the king, who at this moment gathered his hair with his fingers and pushed it behind his ears, as if he was impatient because breakfast was not served. His eyes rested for a moment on Zbyszko, and at that the young knight felt afraid, fearing that perhaps he would be obliged to face the angry king. This was the first time he had thought seriously about the consequences of his rash action. Until now it had seemed to him to be something remote, therefore not worthy of sorrow.

The German did not know that that youth who had attacked him so boldly on the highway, was so

near. The breakfast began. They brought in caudle, seasoned so strongly with eggs, cinnamon, cloves, ginger and saffron, that the fragrance filled the whole room. In the meanwhile the fool Ciaruszek, sitting on a chair in the doorway, began to imitate the singing of a nightingale, of which the king was very fond. Then another jester went around the table, stopped behind the guests and imitated the buzzing of a bee so well, that some of them began to defend their heads. Seeing this, the others burst with laughter. Zbyszko had served the princess and Danusia diligently; but when Lichtenstein began to clap his baldhead, he again forgot about his danger and began to laugh. The young Lithuanian *kniaz*, Jamut, who was standing beside him, also laughed at this very heartily. The Krzyzak having finally noticed his mistake, put his hand in his pocket, and turning to the bishop, Kropidlo, said a few words to him in German; the bishop immediately repeated them in Polish.

"The noble lord says to you," said he, turning toward the fool, "that you will receive two *skojece*; but do not buzz too near, because the bee is driven away, but the drones are killed."

The fool took the two *skojece* given to him by the Krzyzak, and taking advantage of the license granted at all courts to the fools, answered:

"There is plenty of honey in the province of Dobrzyn;¹ that is why it is beset with the drones. Drive them, King Wladyslaw!"

"Here is a penny from me, because you have said a clever thing," said Kropidlo, "but remember

¹The province of Dobrzyn was seized by the Knights of the Cross on the ground of an unlawful agreement with Wladyslaw Opolczyk.

that if the rope break, the beehive keeper will break his neck.¹ Those drones from Malborg, by whom Dobrzyn is beset, have stings, and it is dangerous to climb to the beehives."

"Owa!" exclaimed Zyndram of Maszkow, the sword bearer of Krakow, "one can smoke them out!"

"With what?"

"With powder."

"Or cut the beehive with an axe," added the gigantic Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice.

Zbyszko's heart was ready to leap with joy, because he thought that such words betokened war. Kuno von Lichtenstein understood what was said, because during his long sojourn in Torun and Chelmno, he learned the Polish language; but he would not use it on account of pride. But now, being irritated by the words of Zyndram of Maszkow, he looked at him sharply with his grey eyes and said:

"We shall see."

"Our fathers saw at Płowce² and at Wilno," answered Zyndram.

"*Pax vobiscum!*" exclaimed Kropidlo. "*Pax, pax!* If only the *ksiondz*³ Mikolaj of Kurow, will give up his Kujawian bishopric, and the gracious king appoint me in his place, I will preach you such a beautiful sermon about the love between Christian nations, that you will sincerely repent. Hatred is nothing but *ignis* and *ignis infernalis* at that; such a dreadful fire that one cannot extinguish it with

¹ Allusion to beehives on the trees; to take honey from them, the keeper was obliged to climb a rope.

² Famous battle in which the Germans were defeated by King Wladyslaw Lokietek.

³ Ksiondz-priest.

water, but is obliged to pour wine on it. Give us some wine! We will go on *ops*,¹ as the late Bishop Zawisza of Kurozwenki used to say!"

"And from *ops* to hell, the devil says," added the fool Ciaruszek.

"Let him take you!"

"It would be more amusing for him to take you. They have not yet seen the devil with Kropidlo, but I think we shall all have that pleasure."

"I will sprinkle you first. Give us some wine and may love blossom among the Christians!"

"Among true Christians!" added Kuno von Lichtenstein, emphatically.

"What?" exclaimed the Krakowian bishop Wysz, raising his head; "are you not in an old Christian kingdom? Are not our churches older than yours in Malborg?"²

"I don't know," answered the Krzyzak. The king was especially sensitive where any question about Christianity arose. It seemed to him that the Krzyzak wished to make an allusion to him; therefore his cheeks flamed immediately and his eyes began to shine.

"What!" said he, in a deep voice, "am I not a Christian king?"

"The kingdom calls itself a Christian one," coolly answered the Krzyzak; "but its customs are pagan."

At this many angry knights arose; Marcin of Wrocinowice, whose coat of arms was Polkoza, Florian of Korytnica, Bartosz of Wodzinek, Domarat of Kobylany, Zyndram of Maszkow, Powala of Taczew, Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice, Jaxa of Targowisko, Krzon of Kozioglowy, Zygmunt of

¹ We will go to dissipate.

² Marienburg in German.

Bobowa and Staszko of Charbimowice, powerful and famous knights, victorious in many battles and in many tournaments. Alternately blushing and turning pale from anger, gnashing their teeth, they began to shout:

"Woe to us! He is a guest and we cannot challenge him!"

Zawisza Czarny, Sulimeczyk, the most famous among the famous, "the model of knighthood," turned to Lichtenstein with a frown on his forehead and said:

"I do not recognize you, Kuno. How can you, a knight, insult a mighty nation, when you know that, being an envoy, you cannot be punished for it."

But Kuno quietly sustained the threatening look, and answered slowly and precisely:

"Our Order, before it came to Prussia, fought in Palestine; even there the Saracens respected the envoys. But you do not respect them; that is the reason I called your customs pagan."

At these words the uproar increased. Round the table again were heard shouts: "Woe! Woe!"

But they subsided when the king, who was furious, clasped his hands in the Lithuanian fashion. Then the old Jasko Topor of Tenczyn, castellan of Krakow, venerable, grave and dreaded on account of the importance of his office, arose and said:

"Noble Knight of Lichtenstein, if you, an envoy, have been insulted, speak, and severe punishment will be given quickly."

"It would not have happened to me in any other Christian country," answered Kuno. "Yesterday on the road to Tyniec I was attacked by one of your knights, and although he could very easily

recognize by the cross on my mantle who I was, he attempted my life."

Zbyszko, having heard these words, became very pale and involuntarily glanced at the king, whose anger was terrible. Jasko of Tenczyn was surprised, and said :

"Can it be possible?"

"Ask the Pan of Taczew, who was a witness of the incident."

"All eyes turned toward Powala, who stood for a while gloomy, and with lowered eyelids; then he said :

"Yes, it is so!"

Hearing this the knights began to shout: "Shame! Shame! The earth will devour such a man!" Because of this disgrace some of them began to strike their chests with their hands, and others to rap the silver dishes, not knowing what to do.

"Why did you not kill him?" shouted the king.

"Because his head belongs to the court," answered Powala.

"Have you put him in prison?" asked the castellan, Topor of Tenczyn.

"No. He is a *włodyka*, who swore on his knightly honor, that he would appear."

"But he will not appear!" ironically exclaimed Kuno, raising his head.

At that moment a young voice resounded behind the Krzyzak :

"I did it; I, Zbyszko of Bogdaniec!"

After these words the knights rushed toward the unhappy Zbyszko; but they were stopped by a threatening nod from the king who began to shout

in an angry voice, similar to the rattling of a carriage rolling over the stones :

“ Cut his head off ! Cut his head off ! Let the Krzyzak send it to Malborg to the grand master ! ”

Then he cried to the young Lithuanian prince standing near.

“ Hold him, Jamont ! ”

The frightened Jamont put his trembling hands on Zbyszko's shoulders.

But the white-bearded castellan of Krakow, Topor of Tenczyn, raised his hand as a sign that he wished to speak ; when everybody was quiet, he said :

“ Gracious king ! Let this *comthur* be convinced that not only your impetuous anger, but our laws will punish with death any who insult an envoy. Otherwise he will think that there are no Christian laws in this country. To-morrow I will judge the offender.”

The last words he said quietly and as though no one could change his decision. Then he said to Jamont :

“ Shut him in the tower. As for you, Pan of Taczew, you will be a witness.”

“ I will tell about the offence of this lad,” answered Powala, looking at Lichtenstein.

“ He is right ! ” immediately said some knights. “ He is only a lad ! Why should the shame be put on us all ! ”

There was a moment of silence, and angry looks were cast at the Krzyzak. In the meanwhile Jamont conducted Zbyszko to the court-yard of the castle and intrusted him to the archers. In his young heart he pitied the prisoner, and this

pity was increased by his natural hatred of the Germans. But he was a Lithuanian, accustomed to fulfill blindly the orders of the grand duke; being himself afraid of the king's wrath, he began to whisper to the young knight, with kindly persuasion:

"Do you know, what I would do if in your place? Hang myself! It will be the best! The *korol*¹ is angry: they will cut off your head. Why should you not make him joyful? Hang yourself, *druh*!² Such is the custom in my country."

Zbyszko, half dazed with shame and fear, at first did not seem to understand the words of the *kni-azik*; ³ but finally he understood them and then he was amazed:

"What do you say?"

"Hang yourself! Why should they judge you. You will only afford pleasure for the king!" repeated Jamont.

"Hang your own self!" exclaimed the young *wlodyka*. "They have baptized you but your heathen skin remains on you. Do you not know that it is a sin for a Christian to kill himself?"

The *kniar* shrugged his shoulders:

"It will not be according to your will. They will cut off your head just the same."

These words angered Z'y-zko, and he wondered if it would be proper to challenge the *boharzowik*⁴ for a fight either on his back or on foot, with swords or with axes: but he stifled this desire. He dropped his head sadly and surrounded by the archers, went silently to the tower.

In the meantime the evangelist's attention in the

¹ King. ² Friend. ³ Diminutive of *kniar* prince.

⁴ Diminutive of *boharz* — lord.

dining hall was turned to Danusia, who became pale with fright. She stood motionless like a wax figure in a church. But when she heard that they were going to execute Zbyszko, then she was seized with great fear; her mouth quivered and at once she began to cry so loudly and so pitifully, that all faces turned toward her and the king himself asked her:

“What is the matter with thee?”

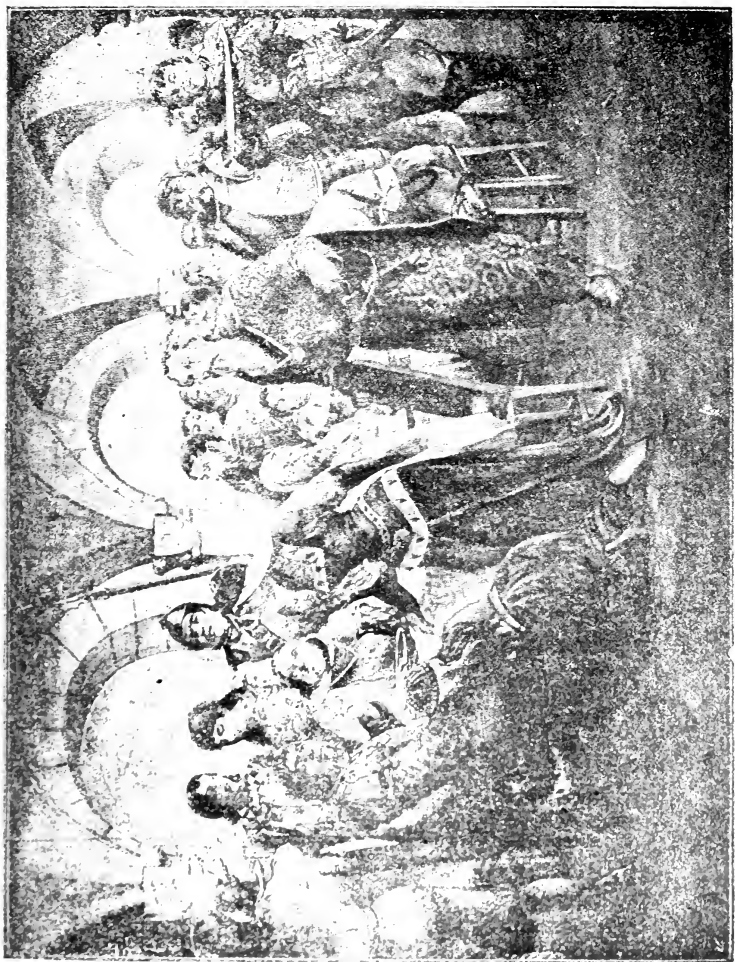
“Gracious king!” said the Princess Anna, “she is the daughter of Jurand of Spychow and this unhappy knight made a vow to her. He promised her to tear three peacock tufts from the helmets of the Germans, and having noticed such a tuft on the helmet of this *comthur*, he thought that God himself had sent the Krzyzak. He did not attack him, lord, through malice, but through stupidity; therefore be merciful and do not punish him, we beseech you on our knees!”

Having said this she arose, seized Danusia by the hand, and rushed with her toward the king, who seeing this began to retire. But both kneeled before him and Danusia began to cry;

“Forgive Zbyszko, king, forgive Zbyszko!”

Because she was afraid, she hid her fair head between the folds of the king's dress, kissed his knees and trembled like a leaf. Anna Ziemowitowa kneeled on the other side and having clasped her hands, looked at the king on whose face there was visible great perplexity. He retired toward the chair, but did not push Danusia back, only waved his hands.

“Do not trouble me!” he cried. “The youth is guilty; he has brought disgrace on the whole country! They must execute him!”



“ Both knelt before him, and Danusia began to cry : ‘ Forgive Zbyszko, King, forgive Zbyszko ! ’ ”



But the little hands clung closer and closer to his knees and the child cried more and more pitifully :

“Forgive Zbyszko, king, forgive Zbyszko!”

Now the voices of some knights were heard to exclaim :

“Jurand of Spychow is a famous knight, and the cause of awe to the Germans.”

“And that youth fought bravely at Wilno!” added Powala.

But the king excused himself further, although he pitied Danusia.

“He is not guilty toward me and it is not I who can forgive him. Let the envoy of the Order pardon him, then I will pardon him also; but if the envoy will not, then he must die.”

“Forgive him, sir!” exclaimed both of the princesses.

“Forgive, forgive!” repeated the voices of the knights.

Kuno closed his eyes and sat with uplifted forehead, as if he was delighted to see both princesses and such famous knights entreating him. Then his appearance changed; he dropped his head, crossed his hands on his breast and from a proud man became a humble one, and said with a soft, mild voice :

“Christ, our Saviour, forgave his enemies and even the malefactor on the cross.”

“He is a true knight!” said Bishop Wysz.

“He is, he is!”

“How can I refuse to forgive,” continued Kuno, “being not only a Christian, but also a monk? Therefore I forgive him with all my heart, as Christ’s servant and friar!”

"Honor to him!" shouted Powala of Taczew.

"Honor!" repeated the others.

"But," said the Krzyzak, "I am here among you as an envoy and I carry in me the majesty of the whole Order which is Christ's Order. Whosoever offends me, therefore, offends the Order; and whosoever offends the Order, offends Christ himself; and such an offence, I, in the presence of God and the people, cannot forgive; and if your law does not punish it, let all Christian lords know."

After these words, there was a profound silence. Then after a while there could be heard here and there the gnashing of teeth, the heavy breathing of suppressed wrath and Danusia's sobbings.

By evening all hearts were in sympathy with Zbyszko. The same knights who in the morning were ready to cut him into pieces, were now considering how they could help him. The princesses determined to see the queen, and beseech her to prevail upon Lichtenstein to withdraw his complaint; or if necessary to write to the grand master of the Order, and ask him to command Kuno to give up the case. This plan seemed to be the best because Jadwiga was regarded with such unusual respect that if the grand master refused her request, it would make the pope angry and also all Christian lords. It was not likely that he would refuse because Konrad von Jungingen was a peaceable man. Unfortunately Bishop Wysz of Krakow, who was also the queen's physician, forbade them to mention even a word about this affair to the queen. "She never likes to hear about death sentences," he said, "and she takes even the question of a simple robber's death too seriously; she will worry much more if she hear about this young

man who hopes to obtain mercy from her. But such anxiety will make her seriously ill, and her health is worth more to the whole kingdom than ten knightly heads." He finally said that if anyone should dare, notwithstanding what he had said, to disturb the queen, on that one he would cause the king's anger to rest and then he threatened such an one with excommunication.

Both princesses were frightened at such menace and determined to be silent before the queen; but instead to beseech the king until he showed some mercy. The whole court and all the knights sympathized with Zbyszko. Powala of Taczew declared that he would tell the whole truth; but that he would also speak in favor of the young man, because the whole affair was only an instance of childish impetuosity. But notwithstanding all this, everybody could see, and the castellan, Jasko of Tenczyn made it known, that if the Krzyzak was unrelenting, then the severe law must be fulfilled.

Therefore the knights were still more indignant against Lichtenstein and they all thought and even said frankly: "He is an envoy and cannot be called to the lists; but when he returns to Malborg, God will not permit that he die a natural death." They were not talking in vain, because a knight who wore the girdle was not permitted to say even one word without meaning it, and the knight who vowed anything, was obliged to accomplish his vow or perish. Powala was the most implacably angry because he had a beloved daughter of Danusia's age in Taczew, and Danusia's tears made his heart tender.

Consequently, that same day, he went to see

Zbyszko, in his underground cell, commanded him to have hope, and told him about the princesses' prayers and about Danusia's tears. Zbyszko having learned that the girl threw herself at the king's feet for his sake, was moved to tears, and wishing to express his gratitude, said, wiping his tears with his hand:

"Hej! may God bless her, and permit me as soon as possible to engage in a combat, either on horseback or on foot, for her sake! I did not promise Germans enough to her! To such a lady, I ought to vow as many as she has years. If the Lord Jesus will only release me from this tower, I will not be niggardly with her!" He raised his eyes, full of gratitude.

"First promise something to some church," advised the *Pan* of Taczew; "if your promise is pleasing, you will surely soon be free. Now listen; your uncle went to see Lichtenstein, and I will go see him also. It will be no shame for you to ask his pardon, because you are guilty; and then you do not ask for pardon of Lichtenstein, but an envoy. Are you ready?"

"As soon as such a knight as your grace tells me it is proper, I will do it. But if he require me to ask him for pardon in the same way he asked us to do it, on the road from Tyniec, then let them cut off my head. My uncle will remain and he will avenge me when the envoy's mission is ended."

"We shall hear first what he says to Macko," answered Powala.

And Macko really went to see the German; but he returned as gloomy as the night and went directly to the king, to whom he was presented by the castellan himself. The king received Macko

kindly because he had been appeased; when Macko kneeled, he immediately told him to arise, asking what he wished.

"Gracious lord," said Macko, "there was an offence, there must be a punishment; otherwise, there would be no law in the world. But I am also guilty because I did not try to restrain the natural impetuosity of that youth; I even praised him for it. It is my fault, gracious king, because I often told him: 'First cut, and then look to see whom you have hurt.' That was right in war, but wrong at the court! But he is a man, pure as gold, the last of our family!"

"He has brought shame upon me and upon my kingdom," said the king; "shall I be gracious to him for that?"

Macko was silent, because when he thought about Zbyszko, grief overpowered him; after a long silence, he began to talk in a broken voice:

"I did not know that I loved him so well; I only know it now when misfortune has come. I am old and he is last of the family. If he perish—we perish! Merciful king and lord, have pity on our family!"

Here Macko kneeled again and having stretched out his arms wasted by war, he spoke with tears:

"We defended Wilno; God gave us honest booty; to whom shall I leave it? If the Krzyzak requires punishment, let punishment come; but permit me to suffer it. What do I care for life without Zbyszko! He is young; let him redeem the land and beget children, as God ordered man to do. The Krzyzak will not ask whose head was cut off, if there is one cut. There will be no shame on the family. It is difficult for a man to die; but it

is better that one man perish than that a family should be destroyed."

Speaking thus he clasped the king's legs; the king began to wink his eyes, which was a sign of emotion with him; finally he said:

"It can not be! I cannot condemn to death a belted knight! It cannot be! It cannot be!"

"And there would be no justice in it," added the castellan. "The law will crush the guilty one; but it is not a monster, which does not look to see whose blood is being shed. And you must consider what shame would fall on your family, if your nephew agreed to your proposal. It would be considered a disgrace, not only to him, but to his children also."

To this Macko replied:

"He would not agree. But if it were done without his knowledge, he would avenge me, even as I also will avenge him."

"Ha!" said Tenczynski, "persuade the Krzyzak to withdraw the complaint."

"I have asked him."

"And what?" asked the king, stretching his neck; "what did he say?"

"He answered me thus: 'You ought to have asked me for pardon on the road to Tyniec; you would not then; now I will not.'"

"And why didn't you do it?"

"Because he required us to dismount and apologize on foot."

The king having put his hair behind his ears, commenced to say something when a courtier entered to announce that the Knight of Lichtenstein was asking for an audience.

Having heard this, Jagiello looked at Jasko of

Tenczyn, then at Macko. He ordered them to remain, perhaps with the hope that he would be able to take advantage of this opportunity and using his kingly authority, bring the affair to an end.

Meanwhile the Krzyzak entered, bowed to the king, and said :

" Gracious lord ! Here is the written complaint about the insult which I suffered in your kingdom."

" Complain to him," answered the king, pointing to Jasko of Tenczyn.

The Krzyzak, looking directly into the king's face, said :

" I know neither your laws nor your courts ; I only know, that an envoy of the Order can complain only to the king."

Jagiello's small eyes flashed with impatience ; he stretched out his hand however, and accepted the complaint which he handed to Tenczynski.

The castellan unfolded it and began to read ; but the further he read, the more sorrowful and sad his face became.

" Sir," said he, finally, " you are seeking the life of that lad, as though he were dangerous to the whole Order. Is it possible that the Knights of the Cross are afraid even of the children ? "

" The Knights of the Cross are not afraid of anyone," answered the *comthur*, proudly.

And the old castellan added :

" And especially of God."

The next day Powala of Taczew testified to everything he could before the court of the castellan, that would lessen the enormity of Zbyszko's offence. But in vain did he attribute the deed to childishness and lack of experience ; in vain he said that even some one older, if he had made the same vow,

prayed for its fulfillment and then had suddenly perceived in front of him such a crest, would also have believed that it was God's providence. But one thing, the worthy knight could not deny; had it not been for him, Zbyszko's spear would have pierced the Krzyzak's chest. Kuno had brought to the court the armor which he wore that day; it appeared that it was so thin that Zbyszko with his great strength, would have pierced it and killed the envoy, if Powala of Taczew had not prevented him. Then they asked Zbyszko if he intended to kill the Krzyzak, and he could not deny it. "I warned him from afar," said he, "to point his lance, and had he shouted in reply that he was an envoy, I would not have attacked him."

These words pleased the knights who, on account of their sympathy for the lad, were present in great numbers, and immediately numerous voices were heard to say: "True! Why did he not reply!" But the castellan's face remained gloomy and severe. Having ordered those present to be silent, he meditated for a while, then looked sharply at Zbyszko, and asked:

"Can you swear by the Passion of our Lord that you saw neither the mantle nor the cross?"

"No!" answered Zbyszko. "Had I not seen the cross, I would have thought he was one of our knights, and I would not have attacked one of ours."

"And how was it possible to find any Krzyzak near Krakow, except an envoy, or some one from his retinue?"

To this Zbyszko did not reply, because there was nothing to be said. To everybody it was clear, that if the *Pan* of Taczanow had not interposed, at

the present moment there would lie before them not the armor of the envoy, but the envoy himself, with pierced breast—an eternal disgrace to the Polish nation:—therefore even those who sympathized with Zbyszko, with their whole souls, understood that he could not expect a mild sentence.

In fact, after a while the castellan said:

“As you did not stop to think whom you were attacking, and you did it without anger, therefore our Saviour will forgive you; but you had better commit yourself to the care of the Most Holy Lady, because the law cannot condone your offence.”

Having heard this, Zbyszko, although he expected such words, became somewhat pale; but he soon shook his long hair, made the sign of the cross, and said:

“God’s will! I cannot help it!”

Then he turned to Macko and looked expressively at Lichtenstein, as if to recommend him to Macko’s memory; his uncle nodded in return that he understood and would remember. Lichtenstein also understood the look and the nod, and although he was as courageous as implacable, a cold shiver ran through him—so dreadful and ill-omened was the face of the old warrior. The Krzyzak knew that between him and that knight it would be a question of life or death. That even if he wanted to avoid the combat, he could not do it; that when his mission was ended, they must meet, even at Malbork.¹

Meanwhile the castellan went to the adjoining room to dictate the sentence to a secretary. Some

¹ Marienburg in German.

of the knights during the interruption came near the Krzyzak, saying:

"May they give you a more merciful sentence in the great day of judgment!

But Lichtenstein cared only for the opinion of Zawisza, because he was noted all over the world for his knightly deeds, his knowledge of the laws of chivalry and his great exactness in keeping them. In the most entangled affairs in which there was any question about knightly honor, they used to go to him even from distant lands. Nobody contradicted his decisions, not only because there was no chance of victory in a contest with him, but because they considered him "the mirror of honor." One word of blame or praise from his mouth was quickly known by the knighthood of Poland, Hungary, Bohemia (Czech) and Germany; and he could decide between the good and evil actions of a knight.

Therefore Lichtenstein approached him as if he would like to justify his deadly grudge, and said:

"The grand master himself, with the chapter, could show him clemency; but I cannot."

"Your grand master has nothing to do with our laws; our king can show clemency to our people, not he," answered Zawisza.

"I as the envoy was obliged to insist upon punishment."

"Lichtenstein, you were first a knight, afterward an envoy!"

"Do you think that I acted against honor?"

"You know our books of chivalry, and you know that they order us to imitate two animals, the lamb and the lion. Which of the two have you imitated in this case?"

"You are not my judge!"

"You asked me if you had committed an offence, and I answered as I thought."

"You give me a hard answer, which I cannot swallow."

"You will be choked by your own malice, not by mine."

"But Christ will put to my account, the fact that I cared more about the dignity of the Order, than about your praise."

"He will judge all of us."

Further conversation was interrupted by the re-appearance of the castellan and the secretary. They knew that the sentence would be a severe one, and everyone waited silently. The castellan sat at the table, and, having taken a crucifix in his hand, ordered Zbyszko to kneel.

The secretary began to read the sentence in Latin. It was a sentence of death. When the reading was over, Zbyszko struck himself several times on the chest, repeating; "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Then he arose and threw himself in Macko's arms, who began to kiss his head and eyes.

In the evening of the same day, a herald announced at the four corners of the market place with the sound of trumpets, to the knights, guests and burghers assembled, that the noble Zbyszko of Bogdaniec was sentenced by the castellan's court to be decapitated by the sword.

But Macko obtained a delay of the execution; this was readily granted, because in those days they used to allow prisoners plenty of time to dispose of their property, as well as to be reconciled to God. Lichtenstein himself did not wish to insist

upon an early execution of the sentence, because he understood, that as long as he obtained satisfaction for the offended majesty of the Order, it would be bad policy to estrange the powerful monarch, to whom he was sent not only to take part in the solemnity of the christening, but also to attend to the negotiations about the province of Dobrzyn. But the chief reason for the delay was the queen's health. Bishop Wysz did not wish even to hear about the execution before her delivery, rightly thinking, that it would be difficult to conceal such an affair from the lady. She would feel such sorrow and distress that it would be very injurious to her health. For these reasons, they granted Zbyszko several weeks, and perhaps more, of life, to make his final arrangements and to bid his friends farewell.

Macko visited him every day and tried to console him. They spoke sorrowfully about Zbyszko's inevitable death, and still more sorrowfully about the fact that the family would become extinct.

"It cannot be otherwise, unless you marry," Zbyszko said once.

"I would prefer to find some distant relative," answered the sorrowful Macko. "How can I think about women, when they are going to behead you. And even if I am obliged to marry, I will not do it, until I send a knightly challenge to Lichtenstein, and seek to avenge your death. Do not fear!"

"God will reward you. I have at least that joy! But I know that you will not forgive him. How will you avenge me?"

"When his duty as an envoy has ended, there may be a war! If there be war, I will send him a challenge for single combat before the battle."

"On the leveled ground?"

"On the leveled ground, on horseback or on foot, but only for death, not for captivity. If there be peace, then I will go to Malborg and will strike the door of the castle gates with my spear, and will order the trumpeter to proclaim that I challenge Kuno to fight until death. He cannot avoid the contest!"

"Surely he will not refuse. And you will defeat him."

"Defeat? I could not defeat Zawisza, Paszko, nor Powala; but without boasting, I can take care of two like him. That scoundrel Krzyzak shall see! That Fryzjan knight, was he not stronger? And how I cut him through the helmet, until the axe stopped! Did I not?"

Zbyszko breathed with relief and said:

"I will perish with some consolation."

They both began to sigh, and the old nobleman spoke with emotion:

"You mustn't break down with sorrow. Your bones will not search for one another at the day of judgment. I have ordered an honest coffin of oak planks for you. Even the canons of the church of Panna Marya could not have any better. You will not perish like a peasant. I will not permit them to decapitate you on the same cloth on which they behead burghers. I have made an agreement with Amylej, that he furnish a new cloth, so handsome that it would be good enough to cover king's fur. I will not be miserly with prayers, either; don't be afraid!"

Zbyszko's heart rejoiced, and bending toward his uncle's hand, he repeated:

"God will reward you!"

Sometimes, however, notwithstanding all this consolation he was seized with a feeling of dreadful loneliness; therefore, another time when Macko came to see him, as soon as he had welcomed him, he asked him, looking through the grate in the wall:

“How is it outside?”

“Beautiful weather, like gold, and the sun warms so that all the world is pleased.”

Hearing this, Zbyszko put both his hands on his neck, and raising his head, said:

“Hej, Mighty God! To have a horse and to ride on fields, on large ones! It is dreadful for a young man to perish! It is dreadful!”

“People perish on horseback!” answered Macko.

“Bah! But how many they kill before!”

And he began to ask about the knights whom he had seen at the king's court; about Zawisza, Farurej, Powala of Taczew, about Lis of Targowisko and about all the others; what they were doing; how they amused themselves; in what honest exercises they passed the time? And he listened with avidity to Macko who told him that in the morning, the knights dressed in their armor, jumped over horses, broke ropes, tried one another's skill with swords and with axes having sharp ends made of lead; finally, he told how they feasted and what songs they sang. Zbyszko longed with heart and soul to be with them, and when he learned that Zawisza, immediately after the christening, intended to go somewhere beyond Hungary, against the Turks, he could not refrain from exclaiming:

“If they would only let me go! It would be better to perish among the pagans!”

But this could not be done. In the meanwhile something else happened. Both princesses of Mazowsze had not ceased to think about Zbyszko, who had captivated them by his youth and beauty. Finally the Princess Alexandra Ziemowitowna decided to send a letter to the grand master. It was true that the grand master could not alter the sentence, pronounced by the castellan; but he could intercede with the king in favor of the youth. It was not right for Jagiello to show any clemency, because the offence was an attempt on the life of the envoy; but if the grand master besought the king, then the king would pardon the lad. Therefore hope entered the hearts of both princesses. Princess Alexandra being fond of the polished monk-knights, was a great favorite with them also. Very often they sent her from Marienburg, rich presents and letters in which the master called her venerable, pious benefactress and the particular protectress of the Order. Her words could do much; it was probable that her wishes would not be denied. The question now was to find a messenger, who would be zealous enough to carry the letter as soon as possible and return immediately with the answer. Having heard this, the old Macko determined without any hesitation to do it.

The castellan promised to delay the execution. Full of hope, Macko set himself to work the same day to prepare for the journey. Then he went to see Zbyszko, to tell him the good news.

At first Zbyszko was filled with as great joy, as if they had already opened the door of the tower for him. But afterward he became thoughtful and gloomy, and said:

"Who can expect anything from the Germans! Lichtenstein also could ask the king for clemency; and he could get some benefit from it because he would thus avoid your vengeance; but he will not do anything."

"He is angry because we would not apologize on the road to Tyniec. The people speak well about the master, Konrad. At any rate you will not lose anything by it."

"Sure," said Zbyszko, "but do not bow too low to him."

"I shall not. I am going with the letter from Princess Alexandra; that is all."

"Well, as you are so kind, may God help you!"

Suddenly he looked sharply at his uncle and said:

"But if the king pardon me, Lichtenstein shall be mine, not yours. Remember!"

"You are not yet sure about your neck, therefore don't make any promises. You have enough of those stupid vows!" said the angry old man.

Then they threw themselves into each other's arms. Zbyszko remained alone. Hope and uncertainty tossed his soul by turns; but when night came, and with it a storm, when the uncovered window was lighted by ill-omened lightnings and the walls shook with the thunder, when finally the whistling wind rushed into the tower, Zbyszko plunged into darkness, again lost confidence; all night he could not close his eyes.

"I shall not escape death," he thought; "nothing can help me!"

But the next day, the worthy Princess Anna Januszowna came to see him, and brought Danusia

who wore her little lute at her belt. Zbyszko fell at their feet; then, although he was in great distress, after a sleepless night, in woe and uncertainty, he did not forget his duty as a knight and expressed his surprise about Danusia's beauty.

But the princess looked at him sadly and said:

"You must not wonder at her; if Macko does not bring a favorable answer, or if he does not return at all, you will wonder at better things in heaven!"

Then she began to weep as she thought of the uncertain future of the little knight. Danusia wept also. Zbyszko kneeled again at their feet, because his heart became soft like heated wax in the presence of such grief. He did not love Danusia as a man loves a woman; but he felt that he loved her dearly. The sight of her had such an effect on him that he became like another man, less severe, less impetuous, less warlike. Finally great grief filled him because he must leave her before he could accomplish the vow which he had made to her.

"Poor child, I cannot put at your feet those peacock crests," said he. "But when I stand in the presence of God, I will say: 'Lord, forgive me my sins, and give *Panna Jurandowna* of Spychow all riches on earth.'"

"You met only a short time ago," said the princess. "God will not grant it!"

Zbyszko began to recollect the incident which occurred in Tyniec and his heart was melted. Finally he asked Danusia to sing for him the same song which she was singing when he seized her from the falling bench and carried her to the princess.

Therefore Danusia, although she did not feel like singing, raised her closed eyes toward the vault and began :

“ If I only could get
The wings like a birdie,
I would fly quickly
To my dearest Jasiek !
I would then be seated
On the high enclosure :
Look my dear Jasiulku——”

But suddenly the tears began to flow down her face, and she was unable to sing any more. Zbyszko seized her in his arms, as he had done in the inn at Tyniec and began to walk with her around the room, repeating in ecstasy :

“ If God release me from this prison, when you grow up, if your father give his consent, I will take you for my wife ! Hej !”

Danusia embraced him and hid her face on his shoulder. His grief which became greater and greater, flowed from a rustic Slavonic nature, and changed in that simple soul almost to a rustic song :

“ I will take you, girl !
I will take you !”

CHAPTER VI.

AN event now happened, compared with which all other affairs lost their importance. Toward evening of the twenty-first of June, the news of the queen's sudden illness spread throughout the castle. Bishop Wysz and the other doctors remained in her room the whole night. It was known that the queen was threatened with premature confinement. The castellan of Krakow, Jasko Topor of Tenczyn, sent a messenger to the absent king that same night. The next day the news spread throughout the entire city and its environs. It was Sunday, therefore the churches were crowded. All doubt ceased. After mass the guests and the knights, who had come to be present at the festivals, the nobles and the burghers, went to the castle; the guilds and the fraternities came out with their banners. From noontide numberless crowds of people surrounded Wawel, but order was kept by the king's archers. The city was almost deserted; crowds of peasants moved toward the castle to learn some news about the health of their beloved queen. Finally there appeared in the principal gate, the bishops and the castellan, and with them other canons, king's counselors and knights. They mingled with the people telling them the news, but forbidding any loud manifestation of joy, because it would be injurious to the sick queen. They announced to all, that the queen was delivered of a daughter. This news filled the hearts of all with joy, especially when they learned

that, although the confinement was premature, there was now no danger, neither for the mother nor for the child. The people began to disperse because it was forbidden to shout near the castle and everybody wished to manifest his joy. Therefore the streets of the city were filled immediately, and exulting songs and exclamations resounded in every corner. They were not disappointed because a girl had been born. "Was it unfortunate that King Louis had no sons and that Jadwiga became our queen? By her marriage with Jagiello, the strength of the kingdom was doubled. The same will happen again. Where can one find a richer heiress than our queen. Neither the Roman emperor nor any king possesses such dominion, nor so numerous a knighthood! There will be great competition among the monarchs for her hand; the most powerful of them will bow to our king and queen; they will come to Krakow, and we merchants will profit by it; perhaps some new domains, Bohemian or Hungarian, will be added to our kingdom."

Thus spoke the merchants among themselves, and their joy increased every moment. They feasted in the private houses and in the inns. The market place was filled with lanterns and torches. Almost till daybreak, there was great life and animation throughout the city.

During the morning, they heard more news from the castle.

They heard that the *kisimdz* Bishop Peter, had baptized the child during the night. On account of this, they feared that the little girl was not very strong. But the experienced townswomen quoted some similar cases, in which the infants had grown

stronger immediately after baptism. Therefore they comforted themselves with this hope; their confidence was greatly increased by the name given to the princess.

"Neither Bonifacius nor Bonifacia can die immediately after baptism; the child so named is destined to accomplish something great," they said. "During the first years, especially during the first weeks, the child cannot do anything good or bad."

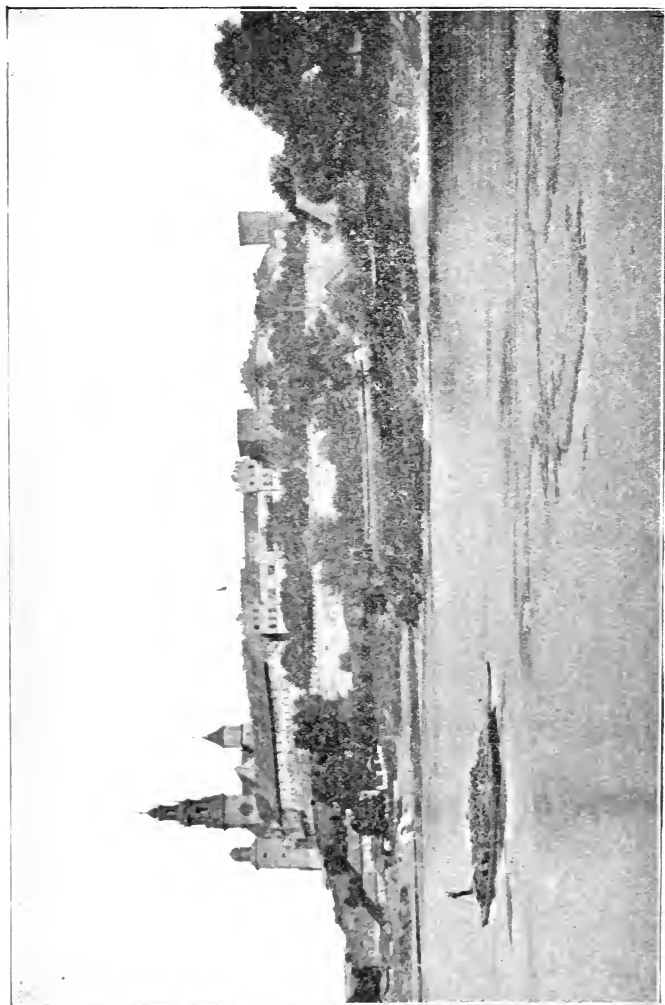
The next day, however, there came bad news from the castle concerning the infant and the mother, and the city was excited. During the whole day, the churches were as crowded as they were during the time of absolution. Votive offerings were very numerous for the queen's and princess' health. One could see poor peasants offering some grain, lambs, chickens, ropes of dried mushrooms or baskets of nuts. There came rich offerings from the knights, from the merchants and from the artisans. They sent messengers to the places where miracles were performed. Astrologers consulted the stars. In Krakow itself, they ordered numerous processions. All guilds and fraternities took part in them. There was also a children's procession because the people thought that these innocent beings would be more apt to obtain God's favor. Through the gates new crowds were coming.

Thus day after day passed, with continual ringing of bells, with the noise of the crowds in the churches, with processions and with prayers. But when at the end of a week, the beloved queen and the child were still living, hope began to enter the hearts of the people. It seemed to them impos-

sible, that God would take from the kingdom the queen who, having done so much for it, would thus be obliged to leave so much unfinished. The scholars told how much she had done for the schools; the clergy, how much for God's glory; the statesmen, how much for peace among Christian monarchs; the jurisconsults, how much for justice; the poor people, how much for poverty. None of them could believe that the life so necessary to the kingdom and to the whole world, would be ended prematurely.

In the meanwhile on July thirteenth, the tolling bells announced the death of the child. The people again swarmed through the streets of the city, and uneasiness seized them. The crowd surrounded Wawel again, inquiring about the queen's health. But now nobody came out with good news. On the contrary, the faces of the lords entering the castle, or returning to the city, were gloomy, and every day became sadder. They said that the *ksiądz* Stanislaw of Skarbimierz, the master of liberal sciences in Krakow, did not leave the queen, who every day received holy communion. They said also, that after every communion, her room was filled with celestial light. Some had seen it through the windows; but such a sight frightened the hearts devoted to the lady; they feared that it was a sign that celestial life had already begun for her.

But everybody did not believe that such a dreadful thing could happen; they reassured themselves with the hope that the justice of heaven would be satisfied with one victim. But on Friday morning, July seventeenth, the news spread among the people that the queen was in agony. Every-



THE CASTLE ON THE WAWEL



body rushed toward Wawel. The city was deserted; even mothers with their infants rushed toward the gates of the castle. The stores were closed; they did not cook any food. All business was suspended; but around Wawel, there was a sea of uneasy, frightened but silent people.

At last at the thirteenth hour from noontime, the bell on the tower of the cathedral resounded. They did not immediately understand what it meant; but the people became uneasy. All heads and all eyes turned toward the tower in which was hung the tolling bell; its mournful tones were soon repeated by other bells in the city: by those at Franciscans, at Trinity, and at Panna Marya. Finally the people understood; then their souls were filled with dread and with great grief. At last a large black flag embroidered with a death's head, appeared on the tower. Then all doubt vanished: the queen had rendered her soul to God.

Beneath the castle walls resounded the roar and the cries of a hundred thousand people and mingled with the gloomy voices of the bells. Some of the people threw themselves on the ground; others tore their clothing or lacerated their faces; while others looked at the walls with silent stupefaction. Some of them were moaning; some, stretching their hands toward the church and toward the queen's room, asked for a miracle and God's mercy. But there were also heard some angry voices, which on account of despair were verging toward blasphemy:

"Why have they taken our dear queen? For what then were our processions, our prayers and our entreaties? Our gold and silver offerings were accepted and we have nothing in return for them!

They took but they gave us nothing in return!" Many others weeping, repeated: "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" The crowds wanted to enter the castle, to look once more on the face of their queen.

This they were not permitted to do; but were promised that the body would soon be placed in the church where everyone would be allowed to view it and to pray beside it. Consequently toward evening, the sorrowing people began to return to the city, talking about the queen's last moments, about the future funeral and the miracles, which would be performed near her body and around her tomb. Some also said that immediately after her burial, the queen would be canonized, and when others said that they doubted if it could be done, many began to be angry and to threaten to go to the pope in Avignon.

A gloomy sorrow fell upon the city, and upon the whole country, not only on the common people, but on everybody; the lucky star of the kingdom was extinguished. Even to many among the lords, everything looked black. They began to ask themselves and others, what would happen now? whether the king had the right to remain after the queen's death and rule over the country; or whether he would return to Lithuania and be satisfied with the throne of the viceroy? Some of them supposed—and the future proved that they thought correctly—that the king himself would be willing to withdraw; and that, in such an event the large provinces would separate from the crown, and the Lithuanians would again begin their attacks against the inhabitants of the kingdom. The Knights of the Cross would become stronger; mightier would become the Roman emperor and the Hungarian

king; and the Polish kingdom, one of the mightiest until yesterday, would be ruined and disgraced.

The merchants, for whom waste territories in Lithuania and in Russia had been opened, foreseeing great losses, made pious vows, hoping that Jagiello might remain on the throne. But in that event, they predicted a war with the Order. It was known that the queen only could restrain his anger. The people recollected a previous occasion, when being indignant at the avidity and rapacity of the Knights of the Cross, she spoke to them in a prophetic vision: "As long as I live, I will restrain my husband's hand and his righteous anger; but remember that after my death, there will fall upon you the punishment for your sins."

In their pride and folly, they were not afraid of a war, calculating, that after the queen's death, the charm of her piety would no longer restrain the wish for affluence of volunteers from eastern countries, and that then thousands of warriors from Germany, Burgundy, France and other countries, would join the Knights of the Cross.

The death of Jadwiga was an event of such importance, that the envoy Lichtenstein, could wait no longer for the answer of the king; but started immediately for Moscow, in order to communicate as soon as possible to the grand master and to the chapter the important, and in some ways, threatening news.

The Hungarian, the Austrian and the Bohemian envoys followed him, or sent messengers to their monarchs. Jagiello received the news in great despair. At first he believed that he said, that he did not wish to war with the Order, and that he would return to Lwów. And this on account of

his grief, he fell into such a stupor, that he could not attend to any affairs of state, and could not answer any questions. Sometimes he was very angry with himself, because he had gone away, and had not been present at the queen's death to bid her farewell and to hear her last words and wishes. In vain Stanislaw of Skarbimierz and Bishop Wysz explained to him that the queen's illness came suddenly, and that according to human calculations he would have had plenty of time to go and return if the confinement had occurred at the expected time. These words did not bring him any consolation; did not assuage his grief. "I am no king without her," he answered the bishop; "only a repentant sinner, who can receive no consolation!" After that he looked at the ground and no one could induce him to speak even one word.

Meanwhile preparations for the queen's funeral occupied all minds. From all over the country, great crowds of lords, nobles and peasants were going to Krakow. The body of the queen was placed in the cathedral on an elevation, so arranged that the end of the coffin in which the queen's head rested, was much higher than the other end. It was so arranged purposely, to enable the people to see the queen's face. In the cathedral continual prayers were offered; around the catafalque thousands of wax candles were burning. In the glare of the candles and among the flowers, she lay quiet and smiling, looking like a mystic rose. The people saw in her a saint; they brought to her those possessed with devils, the crippled and the sick children. From time to time there was heard in the church, the exclamation of some mother who perceived the color return to the face of her sick

child; or the joyful voice of some paralytic man who at once was cured. Then human hearts trembled and the news spread throughout the church, the castle, and the city, and attracted more and more of such human wretchedness as only from a miracle could expect help.

CHAPTER VII.

DURING this time Zbyszko was entirely forgotten. Who in the time of such sorrow and misfortune, could remember about the noble lad or about his imprisonment in the tower of the castle? Zbyszko had heard, however, from the guards, about the queen's illness. He had heard the noise of the people around the castle; when he heard their weeping and the tolling of the bells, he threw himself on his knees, and having forgotten about his own lot, began to mourn the death of the worshipped lady. It seemed to him, that with her, something died within him and that after her death, there was nothing worth living for in this world.

The echo of the funeral—the church bells, the processional songs and the lamenting of the crowd,—was heard for several weeks. During that time, he grew gloomier, lost his appetite, could not sleep and walked in his underground cell like a wild beast in a cage. He suffered in solitude; there were often days during which the jailer did not bring him food nor water. So much was everybody engaged with the queen's funeral, that after her death nobody came to see him: neither the princess, nor Danusia, nor Powala of Taczew, nor the merchant Amylej. Zbyszko thought with bitterness, that as soon as Macko left the city, everybody forgot about him. Sometimes he thought that perhaps the law would forget about him also, and that he would putrefy in the prison till death. Then he prayed for death.

Finally, when after the queen's funeral one month passed, and the second commenced, he began to doubt if Macko would ever return. Macko had promised to ride quickly and not to spare his horse. Marienburg was not at the other end of the world. One could reach it and return in twelve weeks, especially if one were in haste. "But perhaps he has not hurried!" thought Zbyszko, bitterly; "perhaps he has found some woman whom he will gladly conduct to Bogdaniec, and beget his own progeny while I must wait here centuries for God's mercy."

Finally he lost all trace of time, and ceased altogether to talk with the jailer. Only by the spider web thickly covering the iron grating of the window, did he know that fall was near at hand. Whole hours he sat on his bed, his elbows resting on his knees, his fingers in his long hair. Half dreaming and stiff, he did not raise his head even when the warden bringing him food, spoke to him. But at last one day the bolts of the door creaked, and a familiar voice called him from the threshold:

"Zbyszku!"

"Uncle!" exclaimed Zbyszko, rushing from the bed.

Macko seized him in his arms, and began to kiss his fair head. Grief, bitterness and loneliness had so filled the heart of the youth, that he began to cry on his uncle's breast like a little child.

"I thought you would never come back," said he, sobbing.

"That came near being true," answered Macko.

Now Zbyszko raised his head and having looked at him, exclaimed:

"What was the matter with you?"

He looked with amazement at the emaciated and pallid face of the old warrior, at his bent figure and his gray hair.

"What was the matter with you?" he repeated.

Macko sat on the bed and for a while breathed heavily.

"What was the matter?" said he, finally.

"Hardly had I passed the frontier, before the Germans whom I met in the forest, wounded me with a crossbow. *Raubritters!* You know! I cannot breathe! God sent me help, otherwise you would not see me here."

"Who rescued you?"

"Jurand of Spychow," answered Macko.

There was a moment of silence.

"They attacked me; but half a day later he attacked them and hardly half of them escaped. He took me with him to the *grodek* and then to Spychow. I fought with death for three weeks. God did not let me die and although I am not well yet, I have returned."

"Then you have not been in Malborg?"

"On what would I ride? They robbed me of everything and they took the letter with the other things. I returned to ask Princess Ziemowitowa for another; but I have not met her yet, and whether I will see her or not, I do not know. I must prepare for the other world!"

Having said this, he spit on the palm of his hand and stretching it toward Zbyszko, showed him blood on it, saying:

"Do you see?"

After a while he added:

"It must be God's will."

They were both silent for a time under the burden of their gloomy thoughts; then Zbyszko said:

"Then you spit blood continually?"

"How can I help it; there is a spear head half a span long between my ribs. You would spit also! I was a little better before I left Jurand of Spychow; but now I am very tired, because the way was long and I hastened."

"Hej! why did you hasten?"

"Because I wished to see Princess Alexandra and get another letter from her. Jurand of Spychow said 'Go and bring the letter to Spychow. I have a few Germans imprisoned here. I will free one of them if he promise upon his knightly word to carry the letter to the grand master.' For vengeance for his wife's death, he always keeps several German captives and listens joyfully when they moan and their chains rattle. He is a man full of hatred. Understand?"

"I understand. But I wonder that you did not recover the lost letter, if Jurand captured those who attacked you."

"He did not capture all of them. Five or six escaped. Such is our lot!"

"How did they attack you? From ambush?"

"From behind such thick bushes that one could see nothing. I was riding without armor, because the merchants told me that the country was safe, and it was warm."

"Who was at the head of the robbers? A Krzyzak?"

"Not a friar, but a German. Chelminczyk of Lentz, famous for his robberies on the highway."

"What became of him?"

"Jurand chained him. But he has in his dun-

geons two noblemen, Mazurs, whom he wishes to exchange for himself."

There was a moment of silence.

"Dear Jesus," Zbyszko said, finally; "Lichtenstein is alive, and also that robber from Lentz; but we must perish without vengeance. They will behead me and you will not be able to live through the winter."

"Bah! I will not live even until winter. If I could only help you in some way to escape."

"Have you seen anybody here?"

"I went to see the castellan of Krakow. When I learned that Lichtenstein had departed, I thought perhaps the castellan would be less severe."

"Then Lichtenstein went away?"

"Immediately after the queen's death, he went to Marienburg. I went to see the castellan; but he answered me thus: 'They will execute your nephew, not to please Lichtenstein, but because that is his sentence. It will make no difference whether Lichtenstein be here or not. Even if he die, nothing will be changed; the law is according to justice and not like a jacket, which you can turn inside out. The king can show clemency; but no one else.'"

"And where is the king?"

"After the funeral he went to Rus'."

"Well, then there is no hope at all."

"No." The castellan said still further: "I pity him, because the Princess Anna begs for his pardon, but I cannot, I cannot!"

"Then Princess Anna is still here?"

"May God reward her! She is a good lady. She is still here, because Jurandowna is sick, and the princess loves her as her own child."

"For God's sake! Then Danusia is sick! What is the matter with her?"

"I don't know! The princess says that somebody has thrown a spell over her."

"I am sure it is Lichtenstein! Nobody else,—only Lichtenstein—a dog-brother!"

"It may be he. But what can you do to him? Nothing!"

"That is why they all seemed to have forgotten me here; she was sick."

Having said this, Zbyszko began to walk up and down the room; finally he seized Macko's hand, kissed it, and said:

"May God reward you for everything! If you die, I will be the cause of your death. Before you get any worse, you must do one thing more. Go to the castellan and beg him to release me, on my knightly word, for twelve weeks. After that time I will return, and they may behead me. But it must not be that we both die without vengeance. You know! I will go to Marienburg, and immediately send a challenge to Lichtenstein. It cannot be otherwise. One of us must die!"

Macko began to rub his forehead.

"I will go; but will the castellan permit?"

"I will give my knightly word. For twelve weeks—I do not need more."

"No use to talk; twelve weeks! And if you are wounded, you cannot return; what will they think then?"

"I will return if I have to crawl. But don't be afraid! In the meanwhile the king may return and one will be able to beseech him for clemency."

"That is true," answered Macko.

But after awhile he added:

"The castellan also told me this: 'On account of the queen's death, we forgot about your nephew; but now his sentence must be executed.'"

"Ej, he will permit," answered Zbyszko, hopefully. "He knows that a nobleman will keep his word, and it is just the same to him, whether they behead me now, or after St. Michael's day."

"Ha! I will go to-day."

"You better go to Amylej to-day, and rest awhile. He will bandage your wound, and tomorrow you can go to the castellan."

"Well, with God then!"

"With God!"

They hugged each other and Macko turned toward the door; but he stopped on the threshold and frowned as if he remembered something unpleasant.

"Bah, but you do not yet wear the girdle of a knight; Lichtenstein will tell you that he will not fight with you; what can you do then?"

Zbyszko was filled with sorrow, but only for a moment, then he said:

"How is it during war? Is it necessary that a knight choose only knights?"

"War is war; a single combat is quite different."

"True, but wait. You must find some way. Well, there is a way! Prince Janusz will dub me a knight. If the princess and Danusia ask him, he will do it. In the meantime I will fight in Mazowsze with the son of Mikolaj of Dlugolas."

"What for?"

"Because Mikolaj, the same who is with the princess and whom they call Obuch, called Danusia, 'bush.'"

Macko looked at him in amazement. Zbyszko,

wishing to explain better about what had occurred, said further :

" I cannot forgive that, but I cannot fight with Mikolaj, because he must be nearly eighty years old."

To this Macko said :

" Listen ! It is a pity that you should lose your head ; but there will not be a great loss of brains, because you are stupid like a goat."

" Why are you angry ? "

Macko did not answer, but started to leave. Zbyszko sprang toward him and said :

" How is Danusia ? Is she well yet ? Don't be angry for a trifle. You have been absent so long ! "

Again he bent toward the old man who shrugged his shoulders and said mildly :

" Jurandowna is well, only they will not let her go out of her room yet. Good-bye ! "

Zbyszko remained alone, but he felt as if he had been regenerated. He rejoiced to think that he might be allowed to live three months more. He could go to remote lands ; he could find Lichtenstein, and engage in deadly combat with him. Even the thought about that filled him with joy. He would be fortunate, to be able to ride a horse, even for twelve weeks ; to be able to fight and not perish without vengeance. And then—let happen what would happen—it would be a long time anyhow ! The king might return and forgive him. War might break out, and the castellan himself when he saw the victor of the proud Lichtenstein, might say : " Go now into the woods and the fields ! "

Therefore a great hope entered his heart. He did not think that they would refuse to grant him

those three months. He thought that perhaps they would grant him more. The old *Pan* of Tenczyn would never admit that a nobleman could not keep his word.

Therefore when Macko came to the prison, the next day toward evening, Zbyszko, who could hardly sit quiet, sprang toward him and asked:

“Granted?”

Macko sat on the truckle-bed, because he could not stand on account of his feebleness; for a while he breathed heavily and finally said:

“The castellan said: ‘If you wish to divide your land, or attend to your household, then I will release your nephew for a week or two on his knightly word, but for no longer.’”

Zbyszko was so much surprised, that for a while he could not say a word.

“For two weeks?” asked he, finally. “But I could not even reach the frontier in two weeks! How is it? You did not tell the castellan why I wished to go to Marienburg?”

“Not only I, but the Princess Anna begged for you.”

“And what then?”

“What? The old man told her that he did not want your head, and that he pitied you. ‘If I could find,’ said he, ‘some law in his favor, or only a pretext, I would release him altogether; but I cannot. There would be no order in a country in which the people shut their eyes to the law, and acted according to friendship; I will not do it; even if it were Toporezyk, who is a relative of mine, or even my own brother, I would not. Such hard people are here!’ And he said still further: ‘We do not care about the Knights of the Cross;

but we cannot bring reproach on ourselves. What would they think of us, and all our guests, coming from all parts of the world, if I release a nobleman sentenced to death, in order to give him a chance to fight? Would they believe that he will be punished, and that there is some law in our country? I prefer to order one head cut off, than to bring contempt on the king and the kingdom.' The princess told him that that was strange justice, from which even a king's relative could not obtain anything by her prayer; but the old man answered: 'The king may use clemency; but he will not tolerate lawlessness.' Then they began to quarrel because the princess grew very angry: 'Then,' said she, 'don't keep him in the prison!' And the castellan replied to this: 'Very well! To-morrow I will order a scaffold built on the market square.' Then they departed. Only the Lord Jesus can help you."

There was a long moment of silence.

"What?" he said, gloomily. "Then it will be immediately?"

"In two or three days. There is no help. I have done what I could. I fell at the castellan's knees; I implored him for mercy, but he repeated: 'Find a law, or a pretext.' But what can I find? I went to see the *ksiądz* Stanislaw of Skarbimierz, and I begged him to come to you. At least you will have this honor, that the same priest who heard the queen's confession will hear yours. But I did not find him home; he had gone to Princess Anna."

"Perhaps for Danusia!"

"Not at all. The girl is better. I will go see him to-morrow early in the morning. They say

that if he hears one's confession, salvation is as sure as if you had it in your pocket."

Zbyszko put his elbows on his knees and dropped his head so that his hair covered his face entirely. The old man looked at him a long time and finally began to call him softly:

"Zbyszku! Zbyszku!"

The boy raised his head. His face had an expression of anger and of cold hatred, but not of weakness.

"What?"

"Listen carefully; perhaps I have found a way of escape."

Having said this, he approached and began to whisper:

"Have you heard about Prince Witold, who at one time, being imprisoned by our king in Krewo, went out from the prison disguised in a woman's dress. There is no woman who will remain here instead of you, but take my *kubrak*.¹ Take my cowl and go—understand? They will not notice. It is dark behind the door. They will not flash a light into your eyes. They saw me yesterday going out; but they did not look at me closely. Be quiet and listen. They will find me here to-morrow—and what then? Will they cut my head off? That will be no satisfaction, because I will die anyhow in three or four weeks. And you, as soon as you are out of here, to horse, and go straight to Prince Witold. You will present yourself to him; you will bow before him; he will receive you and you will be as safe with him as if you were sitting at God's right hand. They say here that the *kniaz's* armies have been defeated by the Tartars,

¹ A sort of coat.

because the late queen prophesied defeat. If it be true, the *kniaz* will need soldiers and he will welcome you. You must remain with him, because there is no better service in the world. If our king were defeated in a war, it would be his end; but there is such an amount of shrewdness in *Kniaz* Witold, that after a defeat he grows still more powerful. And he is liberal also, and he loves our family. Tell him everything that happened. Tell him that you wanted to go with him against the Tartars; but you could not because you were imprisoned in the tower. If God permit, he will give you some land and peasants; he will dub you a knight and he will intercede for you with the king. He is a good protector—you will see!—What?"

Zbyszko listened silently, and Macko, as if he was excited by his own words, spoke further:

"You must not perish young, but return to Bogdaniec. And when you return, you must immediately take a wife so that our family does not perish. Only when you have children, may you challenge Lichtenstein to fight until death; but before that, you must abstain from seeking vengeance. Take my *kubrak* now, take my cowl and go, in God's name."

Having said this, Macko stood up and began to undress; but Zbyszko arose also, stopped him and said:

"I will not do it, so help me God and Holy Cross."

"Why?" asked Macko, astonished.

"Because I will not!"

Macko became pale with anger.

"I wish you had never been born!"

"You told the castellan," said Zbyszko, "that you would give your head in exchange for mine."

"How do you know that?"

"The *Pan* of Taczew told me."

"What of it?"

"What of it? The castellan told you that disgrace would fall on me and on all my family. Would it not be a still greater disgrace, if I escaped from here, and left you to the vengeance of the law?"

"What vengeance? What can the law do to me, when I must die just the same? Have common sense, for God's mercy!"

"May God punish me if I abandon you now when you are old and sick. Tfu! shame!"

There was silence; one could only hear the heavy, hoarse breathing of Macko, and the archers' calls.

"Listen," Macko said, finally, in broken tones, "it was not shameful for *Kniaz* Witold to escape from Krewo; it would not be for you, either."

"Hej!" answered Zbyszko, with sadness. "You know! *Kniaz* Witold is a great *kniaz*; he received a crown from the king's hand, also riches and dominion; but I, a poor nobleman, have only my honor."

After a while he exclaimed in a sudden burst of anger:

"Then you do not understand that I love you, and that I will not give your head instead of mine?"

At this, Macko stood on his trembling feet, stretched out his hands, and although the nature of the people of those days, was hard, as if forged of iron, he cried suddenly in a heartbroken voice:

"Zbyszku!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next day, the court servants began to make preparations in the market square, to build the scaffold which was to be erected opposite the principal gate of the city hall.

The princess, however, was still consulting with Wojciech Jastrzembiec, Stanislaw of Skarbimierz and other learned canons, who were familiar with the written laws and also with the laws sanctioned by custom.

She was encouraged in these efforts by the castellan's words, when he said, that if they showed him "law or pretext," he would free Zbyszko. Therefore they consulted earnestly, to ascertain if there were any law or custom that would do. Although the *ksiondz* Stanislaw, had prepared Zbyszko for death and administered the last sacraments, he went directly from the prison to the consultation, which lasted almost till daybreak.

The day of execution arrived. From early morning, crowds of people had begun to gather on the market square, because the decapitation of a nobleman excited more curiosity than that of a common criminal. The weather was beautiful. News of the youth and great beauty of the sentenced man, spread among the women. Therefore the whole road leading to the castle, was filled with crowds of townswomen, dressed in their best; in the windows on the market square, and on the balconies, could be seen velvet bonnets, or the fair heads of young girls, ornamented only with wreaths

of lilies and roses. The city councilors, although the affair did not belong in their jurisdiction, all appeared, in order to show their importance and placed themselves near the scaffold. The knights, wishing to show their sympathy for the young man, gathered in great numbers around the elevation. Behind them swarmed the gayly dressed crowd, composed of small merchants and artisans dressed in their guild costumes. Over this compact mass of human heads, one could see the scaffold which was covered with new broadcloth. On the elevation stood the executioner, a German, with broad shoulders, dressed in a red *kubrak* and on his head a cowl of the same color; he carried a heavy two-edged sword; with him were two of his assistants with naked arms and ropes at their girdles. There were also a block and a coffin covered with broadcloth. In Panna Maryia's tower, the bells were ringing, filling the town with metallic sounds and scaring the flocks of doves and jackdaws. The people looked at the scaffold, and at the executioner's sword protruding from it and shining in the sun. They also looked at the knights, on whom the burghers always gazed with respect and eagerness. This time it was worth while looking at them. The most famous knights were standing round the elevation. They admired the broad shoulders and dark hair, falling in abundant curls, of Zawisza Czarny; they admired the short square figure of Zyndram of Maszkow as well as the gigantic stature of Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice; the threatening face of Wojciech of Wodzinek and the great beauty of Dobko of Olesnica, who at the tournament in Torun had defeated twelve knights; they looked admiringly at Zygmunt of Bobowa,

who became equally famous in Koszyce in a fight with the Hungarians, at Krzon of Kozięglowy, at Lis of Targowisko, who was victorious in duels, and at Staszko of Charbimowice who was able to catch a running horse.

General attention was also attracted by the pale face of Macko of Bogdaniec; he was supported by Floryan of Korytnica and Marcin of Wrocimowice. It was generally thought that he was the sentenced man's father.

But the greatest curiosity was aroused by Powala of Taczew who, standing in front, was holding Danusia, dressed in white, with a wreath of green rue resting on her fair hair. The people did not understand what it meant, nor why this young girl was present to look at the execution. Some of them thought she was a sister; others, that she was the knight's lady; but none were able to explain the meaning of her dress or of her presence at the scaffold. The sight of her fair face covered with tears, aroused commiseration and emotion. The people began to criticise the castellan's stubbornness, and the severity of the laws. Those criticisms gradually changed to threats. Finally, here and there, some voices were heard to say, that if the scaffold were destroyed, then the execution would be postponed.

The crowd became eager and excited. They said that if the king were present, he would surely pardon the youth.

But all became quiet when distant shoutings announced the approach of the king's archers, escorting the prisoner. The procession soon appeared in the market square. It was preceded by a funeral fraternity, the members of which were

dressed in long black cloaks, and were covered with veils of the same color, which had openings cut for the eyes. The people were afraid of these gloomy figures and became silent. They were followed by a detachment of soldiers, armed with crossbows, and dressed in elk-skin jerkins; these were the king's Lithuanian guards. Behind them one could see the halberds of another detachment of soldiers. In the centre, between the clerk of the court, who was going to read the sentence, and the *ksiondz* Stanislaw of Skarbimierz who was carrying a crucifix, walked Zbyszko.

All eyes now turned toward him, and at all the windows and from all the balconies, women's heads protruded. Zbyszko was dressed in his white "*jaka*," embroidered with golden griffins and ornamented with gold gallow; in these magnificent clothes he looked like a young prince, or the page of a wealthy court. His broad shoulders and chest and his powerful haunches indicated that he was already a full-grown man; but above that strong figure of a man, appeared a childish face with down on the upper lip. It was a beautiful face like that of a king's page, with golden hair cut evenly over the eyebrows and falling on the shoulders. He walked erect, but was very pale. From time to time he looked at the crowd as if he was dreaming; he looked at the church towers, toward the flocks of jackdaws, and at the bells, ringing his last hour; then his face expressed amazement when he realized that the sobbing of the women, and all this solemnity was for him. Finally, he perceived the scaffold and the executioner's red figure standing on it. Then he shivered and made the sign of the cross; the priest gave him the crucifix to kiss. A

few steps further, a bouquet of roses thrown by a young girl, fell at his feet. Zbyszko stooped, picked up the bouquet and smiled at the girl who began to cry. But evidently he thought that, amidst these crowds and in the presence of these women, waving their kerchiefs from the windows, he must die courageously and at least leave behind him the reputation of "a brave man;" therefore he strained his courage and will to the utmost. With a sudden movement, he threw his hair back, raised his head still higher and walked proudly, almost like a conqueror, whom, according to knightly custom, they conduct to get the prize. The procession advanced slowly, because the crowd was dense and unwillingly made way. In vain the Lithuanian guard, marching in front, shouted: "*Eyk szalin! Eyk szalin! go away!*" The people did not wish to understand these words, and surrounded the soldiers more closely. Although about one-third of the burghers of Krakow were Germans, still there were heard on all sides, threats against the Knights of the Cross: "Shame! Shame! May they perish, those wolves! Must they cut off children's heads for them! Shame on the king and on the kingdom!" The Lithuanians seeing the resistance, took their crossbows from their shoulders, and menaced the crowd; but they did not dare to attack without orders. The captain sent some men to open the way with their halberds and in that manner they reached the knights standing around the scaffold.

They stepped aside without any resistance. The men with halberds entered first, and were followed by Zbyszko, accompanied by the priest and the clerk of the court. At that moment something

happened which nobody had expected. From among the knights, Powala stepped forward with Danusia in his arms and shouted: "Stop!" with such a powerful voice, that the retinue stopped at once, as if rooted to the ground. Neither the captain, nor any of the soldiers dared to oppose the lord and knight, whom they were accustomed to see every day in the castle and often in confidential conversation with the king. Finally, other knights, equally distinguished, also began to shout with commanding voices:

"Stop! Stop!" In the meantime, the *Pan* of Taczew approached Zbyszko and handed Danusia to him.

Zbyszko caught her in his arms and pressed her to his chest, bidding her farewell; but Danusia instead of nestling to him and embracing him, immediately took her white veil from her head and wrapped it around Zbyszko's head, and began to cry in her tearful, childish voice:

"He is mine! He is mine!"

"He is hers!" shouted the powerful voices of the knights. "To the castellan!"

A shout, like the roar of thunder, answered: "To the castellan! To the castellan!" The priest raised his eyes, the clerk looked confused, the captain and his soldiers dropped their arms; everybody understood what had happened.

There was an old Polish and Slavonic custom, as strong as the law, known in Podhale, around Krakow, and even further. If a young girl threw her veil on a man conducted to death, as a sign that she wished to marry him, by so doing she saved his life. The knights, farmers, villagers and townsmen all knew this custom; and the Germans living in



RESCUE OF ZBYSZKO

DANUSIA INSTEAD OF NESTLING TO HIM, AND EMBRACING HIM, IMMEDIATELY TOOK HER WHITE VEIL FROM HER HEAD AND WRAPPED IT AROUND ZBYSZKO'S HEAD AND BEGAN TO CRY IN HER FEARFUL, CHILDISH VOICE, "HE IS MINE! HE IS MINE!"

the old cities and towns, had heard about it. The old man, Macko, almost fainted with emotion; the knights having pushed away the guards, surrounded Zbyszko and Danusia; the joyful people shouted again and again: "To the castellan! To the castellan!"

The crowd moved suddenly, like the waves of the sea. The executioner and his assistants rushed down from the scaffold. Everybody understood that if Jasko of Tenczyn resisted the custom, there would be a riot in the city. In fact the people now rushed to the scaffold. In the twinkling of an eye, they pulled off the cloth and tore it into pieces; then the beams and planks, pulled by strong arms, or cut with axes, began to crack, then a crash, and a few moments later there was not a trace left of the scaffold.

Zbyszko, holding Danusia in his arms, was going to the castle, but this time like a true victor,—triumphant. With him were marching joyfully the most noted knights in the kingdom; thousands of men, women and children were shouting and singing, stretching their arms toward Danusia and praising the beauty and courage of both. At the windows the townswomen were clasping their hands, and everywhere one could see faces covered with tears of joy. A shower of roses, lilies, ribbons and even gold rings were thrown to the lucky youth; he, beaming like the sun, with his heart full of gratitude, embraced his sweet lady from time to time and sometimes kissed her hands. This sight made the townswomen feel so tender, that some of them threw themselves into the arms of their lovers, telling them that if they encountered death, they also would be freed. Zbyszko and Danusia became

the beloved children of the knights, burghers and common people. Macko, whom Floryan of Korytnica and Marcin of Wrocimowice were assisting to walk, was almost beside himself with joy. He wondered why he had not even thought about this means of assistance. Amidst the general bustle, Powala of Taczew told the knights that this remedy had been discovered by Wojciech Jastrzembiec and Stanislaw of Skarbimierz, both experts in the written laws and customs. The knights were all amazed at its simplicity, saying among themselves, that nobody else would have thought about that custom, because the city was inhabited by Germans, and it had not been used for a long time.

Everything, however, still depended on the castellan. The knights and the people went to the castle, which was occupied by *Pan* Krakowski during the king's absence. The clerk of the court, the *ksiondz* Stanislaw of Skarbimierz, Zawisza, Farurej, Zyndram of Maszkow and Powala of Taczew explained to him the power of the custom and reminded him of what he had said himself, that if he found "law or pretext," then he would release the prisoner immediately. And could there be any better law, than the old custom which had never been abolished?

The *Pan* of Tenczyn answered that this custom applied more to the common people and to robbers, than to the nobles; but he knew the law very well, and could not deny its validity. Meanwhile he covered his silvery beard with his hand and smiled, because he was very much pleased. Finally he went to the low portico, accompanied by Princess Anna Danuta, a few priests and the knights.

Zbyszko having perceived him, lifted Danusia

again; the old castellan placed his hand on her golden hair, and gravely and benevolently inclined his hoary head. The assembled people understood this sign and shouted so that the walls of the castle were shaken: "May God preserve you! Long life, just lord! Live and judge us!"

Then the people cheered Zbyszko and Danusia when a moment later, they both went to the portico, fell at the feet of the good Princess Anna Danuta, who had saved Zbyszko's life, because she, together with the scholars, had found the remedy and had taught Danusia how to act.

"Long life to the young couple!" shouted Powala of Taczew.

"Long life!" repeated the others. The castellan, hoary with age, turned toward the princess and said:

"Gracious princess, the betrothal must be performed immediately, because the custom requires it!"

"The betrothal will take place immediately," answered the good lady, whose face was irradiated with joy; "but for the wedding, they must have the consent of Jurand of Spychow."



PART SECOND.



CHAPTER I.

IN merchant Amylej's house, Macko and Zbyszko were deliberating what to do. The old knight expected to die soon, and Father Cybek, a Franciscan friar who had experience in treating wounds, predicted the same; therefore he wanted to return to Bogdaniec to die and be buried beside his forefathers in the cemetery in Ostrow.

But not all of his forefathers were buried there. In days of yore it had been a numerous family of *wlodykas*. During the war their cry was: "Grady!" On their shields, because they claimed to be better *wlodykas* than the others who had no right to a coat of arms, they had emblazoned a Tempa Podkowa. In 1331, in the battle of Plowce, seventy warriors from Bogdaniec were killed in the marshes by German archers. Only one Wojciech, called Tur, escaped. After this defeat by the Germans, the king, Wladyslaw Lokietek, granted him a coat of arms and the estate of Bogdaniec as a special privilege. Wojciech returned home, only to discover the complete annihilation of his family.

While the men of Bogdaniec were perishing from German arrows, the *Raubritters* of Szlonsk fell upon their homes, burned their buildings, and slaughtered or took into slavery the peasants. Wojciech remained alone, the heir of a large but devastated tract of land, which formerly belonged to the whole family of *wlodykas*. Five years afterward he married and he begot two sons, Jasko and

Macko. Afterward he was killed in a forest by an urus.¹

The sons grew up under the mother's care. Her maiden name was Kachna of Spalenica. She was so brave that she conducted two successful expeditions against the Germans of Szlonsk to avenge former wrongs; but in the third expedition she was killed. Before that, however, she built with the help of the slaves, a *grodek*² in Bogdaniec; on account of that, Jasko and Macko, although from their former estates of *wlodykas* were called *wlodykas*, now became men of importance. When Jasko became of age, he married Jagienka of Mocarzew, and begot Zbyszko; Macko remained unmarried. He took care of his nephew's property as far as his war expeditions permitted.

But when during the civil war between Grzymalits and Nalenczs, Bogdaniec was again burned and the peasants scattered, Macko could not restore it, although he toiled for several years. Finally he pledged the land to his relative, the abbot, and with Zbyszko who was small, he went to Lithuania to fight against the Germans.

But he had never forgotten about Bogdaniec. He went to Litwa hoping to become rich from booty so as to return to Bogdaniec, redeem the land from his pledge, colonize it with slaves, rebuild the *grodek* and settle Zbyszko on it. Therefore now, after Zbyszko's lucky deliverance, they were discussing this matter at the house of the merchant, Amylej.

¹ The bison of Pliny; the *urus* of Caesar. The bison, destroyed in all other countries of Europe, is only to be found in Poland in the forest of Białowieża, where a special body of guards takes care of this rare animal.

² It means here a fort, a stronghold, a castle.

They had money enough to redeem the land. They possessed quite a fortune gathered from the booty, from the ransoms paid by the knights captured by them, and from Witold's presents. They had received great benefit from that fight with the two Fryzjan knights. The suits of armor alone, were worth what was considered in those times quite a fortune; beside the armor, they had captured wagons, people, clothes, money and rich implements of war. The merchant Amylej had just purchased many of these things, and among them two pieces of beautiful Flemish broadcloth. Macko sold the splendid armor, because he thought that he would have no use for it. The merchant sold it the next day to Marcin of Wrocimowice, whose coat of arms was Polkoza. He sold it for a large sum, because in those times the suits of armor made in Milan were considered the best in the world and were expensive. Zbyszko regretted very much that they sold it.

"If God give you back your health," said he, to his uncle, "where will you find another like it?"

"There, where I found this one; on some German," answered Macko. "But I shall not escape death. The head of the spear will not come out from my body. When I tried to pull it out with my hands, I pushed it in further. And now there is no help."

"You must drink two or three pots of bear's grease."

"Bah! Father Cybek also said that would be a good thing. But where can I get it here? In Bogdaniec one could very easily kill a bear!"

"Then we must go to Bogdaniec! Only you must not die on the road."

Old Macko looked at his nephew with tenderness.

"I know where you would like to go; to the Prince Janusz's court, or to Jurand of Spychow, and fight the Germans of Chelminsko."

"I will not deny it. I would be glad to go to Warszawa with the princess' court, or to go to Ciechanow; and I would remain as long as possible with Danusia, because now she is not only my lady, but my love also. I tremble when I think of her! I shall follow her even to the end of the world; but now you are first. You did not desert me, therefore I will never abandon you. We must go to Bogdaniec."

"You are a good man," said Macko.

"God would punish me, if I were not mindful of you. Look, they are getting ready! I ordered one wagon to be filled with hay. Amylejowna has made us a present of a feather bed, but I am afraid it will be too warm for you. We will travel slowly, in company with the princess' court, so that you may have good care. When they turn toward Mazowsze, we will turn toward home; may God help us!"

"If I can only live long enough to rebuild the *grodek*!" exclaimed Macko. "I know that after my death, you will not think anything more about Bogdaniec."

"Why will I not?"

"Because your head will be filled with thoughts of battles and of love."

"Did you not think yourself about war? I have planned what I must do; in the first place, I will rebuild the *grodek*."

"Do you mean to do that?" asked Macko.

"Well, and when the *grodek* is finished?"

"When the *grodek* is rebuilt, then I will go to Warszawa to the prince's court, or to Ciechanow."

"After my death?"

"If you die soon, then after your death; but before I go, I will bury you properly; if the Lord Jesus restore your health, then you will remain in Bogdaniec. The princess promised me that I should receive my knightly girdle from the prince. Otherwise Lichtenstein will not fight with me."

"Then afterward you will go to Marienburg?"

"To Marienburg, or even to the end of the world to reach Lichtenstein."

"I do not blame you for it! Either he or you must die!"

"I will bring his girdle and his gloves to Bogdaniec; do not be frightened!"

"You must look out for treachery. There is plenty among them."

"I will bow to Prince Janusz and ask him to send to the grand master for a safe conduct. There is peace now. I will go to Marienburg, where there are always many knights. Then you know? In the first place, Lichtenstein; then I will look for those who wear peacock's tufts, and I will challenge them in turn. If the Lord Jesus grant me victory, then I will fulfill my vow."

Speaking thus, Zbyszko smiled at his own thoughts; his face was like that of a lad who tells what knightly deeds he will perform when he is a man.

"Hej!" said Macko; "if you defeat three knights belonging to great families, then you will not only fulfill your vow, but you will bring some booty!"

"Three!" exclaimed Zbyszko. "In the prison I

promised myself, that I would not be selfish with Danusia. As many knights as I have fingers on both hands!"

Macko shrugged his shoulders.

"Are you surprised?" said Zbyszko. "From Marienburg I shall go to Jurand of Spychow. Why should I not bow to him, he is Danusia's father? With him I shall attack the Germans of Chelminsko. You told me yourself that in the whole of Mazowsze there was no greater ware-wolf against the Germans."

"And if he will not give you Danusia?"

"Why not? He is seeking his vengeance. I am searching for mine. Can he find a better man? And then, the princess has given her consent for the betrothal; he will not refuse."

"I see one thing," said Macko, "you will take all the people from Bogdaniec in order to have a retinue, as is proper for a knight, and the land will remain without hands to till it. As long as I live, I will not let you do it; but after my death, I see, you will take them."

"The Lord God will help me to get a retinue; Janko of Tulcza is a relation of ours and he will help me also."

At that moment the door opened, and as though to prove that the Lord God would help Zbyszko get a retinue, two men entered. They were dark-complexioned, short, dressed in Jewish-like yellow caftans, red caps and very wide trousers. They stopped in the doorway and touched their fingers to their foreheads, to their mouths, and then to their chests; then they bowed to the ground.

"Who are these devils?" asked Macko. "Who are you?"

"Your slaves," answered the newcomers in broken Polish.

"For what reason? Where from? Who sent you here?"

"*Pan Zawisza* sent us here as a present to the young knight, to be his slaves."

"O for God's sake! two men more!" exclaimed Macko, joyfully.

"Of what nationality are you?"

"We are Turks!"

"Turks?" repeated Zbyszko. "I shall have two Turks in my retinue. Have you ever seen Turks?"

And having jumped toward them, he began to turn them around and to look at them curiously. Macko said:

"I have never seen them; but I have heard, that the *Pan* of Garbow has Turks in his service whom he captured while fighting on the Danube with the Roman emperor, Zygmunt. How is it? Are you heathens, your dog-brothers?"

"The lord ordered us to be baptized," said one of the slaves.

"Did you have no money for ransom?"

"We are from far lands, from Asiatic shores, from Brussa."

Zbyszko, who always listened gladly to war stories, and especially when there was anything told about the deeds of the famous Zawisza of Garbow, began to inquire how they were captured. But there was nothing extraordinary in their narration; Zawisza attacked them in a ravine, part of them perished and part were captured; and he sent the prisoners as presents to his different friends. Zbyszko and Macko's hearts were throb-

ing at the sight of such a noble gift, especially as it was difficult to get men in those days and the possession of them constituted true wealth.

In the meanwhile, Zawisza himself accompanied by Powala and Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice arrived. As they had all worked hard to free Zbyszko, they were pleased when they succeeded; therefore everyone of them gave him some present as a souvenir. The liberal *Pan* of Taczew gave him a beautiful large caparison embroidered with gold; Paszko, a Hungarian sword and ten *grzywiens*.¹ Then came Lis of Targowisko, Farurej and Krzon of Kozięglowy, with Marcin of Wrocimowice and finally Zyndram of Maszkow; everyone brought rich presents.

Zbyszko welcomed them with a joyful heart, feeling very happy on account of the presents and because the most famous knights in the kingdom were showing him their friendship. They asked him about his departure and Macko's health, recommending to the latter, different remedies which would miraculously heal wounds.

But Macko recommended Zbyszko to their care, being ready himself for the other world. He said that it was impossible to live with an iron spear head between the ribs. He complained also that he spit blood and could not eat. A quart of shelled nuts, a sausage two spans long and a dish of boiled eggs were all he could eat at once. Father Cybek had bled him several times, hoping in that way to draw out the fever from around his heart, and restore his appetite; but it had not helped him any.

But he was so pleased with the presents given

¹ Grzywna or mark was equal to half pound of silver.

to his nephew, that at that moment he was feeling better, and when the merchant, Amylej, ordered a barrel of wine brought in honor of such famous guests, Macko drank with them. They began to talk about Zbyszko's deliverance and about his betrothal with Danusia. The knights did not doubt that Jurand of Spychow would give his consent, especially if Zbyszko avenged the death of Danusia's mother and captured the peacock tufts.

"But as for Lichtenstein," said Zawisza, "I do not think he will accept your challenge, because he is a friar, and also one of the officers in the Order. Bah! The people of his retinue told me that perhaps he would be elected grand master!"

"If he refuse to fight, he will lose his honor," said Lis of Targowisko.

"No," answered Zawisza, "because he is not a lay knight; and a friar is not permitted to fight in single combat."

"But it often happens that they do fight."

"Because the Order has become corrupt. The knights make different vows; but they often break them, thus setting a bad example to the whole Christian world. But a Krzyzak, especially a *comthur*, is not obliged to accept a challenge."

"Ha! Then only in war can you reach him."

"But they say, that there will be no war," said Zbyszko, "because the Knights of the Cross are afraid of our nation."

To this Zyndram of Maszkow said:

"This peace will not last long. There cannot be a good understanding with the wolf, because he must live on the goods of others."

"In the meantime, perhaps we will be obliged to

fight with Tymur the Lane," said Powala. "Prince Witold was defeated by Edyga; that is certain."

"Certain. *Wojewoda* Spytko will not return," said Paszko Zlodziej of Biskupice.

"The late queen prophesied it would be so," said the *Pan* of Taczew.

"Ha! Then perhaps we will be obliged to go against Tymur."

Here the conversation was turned to the Lithuanian expedition against the Tartars. There was no doubt that Prince Witold, that able commander being rather impetuous, had been badly defeated at Worskla, where a great number of the Lithuanian *bojars* and also a few Polish knights were killed. The knights now gathered in Amylej's house, pitied especially Spytek of Melsztyn, the greatest lord in the kingdom, who went with the expedition as a volunteer; and after the battle he was lost—nobody knew where. They praised his chivalrous deed, and told how he, having received from the commander of the enemy a protective *kolpak*,¹ would not wear it during the battle, preferring honorable death to life granted him by the ruler of a heathen nation. But it was not certain yet, whether he had perished, or was in captivity. If he were a prisoner, he could pay his ransom himself, because his riches were enormous, and he also held in fief the whole Podole from King Wladyslaw.

But the defeat of Witold's army might prove ruinous to the whole of Jagiello's empire. Nobody knew when the Tartars, encouraged by the victory over Witold, might now invade the lands and cities belonging to the grand dukedom. In

¹ High sharp pointed hat.

that case the kingdom of Poland would be involved in a war. Therefore many knights, who like Zawisza, Farurej, Dobko and even Powala, were accustomed to seek adventures and fights in foreign countries, remained in Krakow not knowing what might soon happen. In case Tamerlan, who was the ruler of twenty-seven states, moved the whole Mongolian world, then the peril to the kingdom would be great.

"If it be necessary, then we will measure our swords with the Lame. With us it will not be such an easy matter as it was with those other nations, which he conquered and exterminated. Then the other Christian princes will help us."

To this Zyndram of Maszkow, who especially hated the Order, said bitterly:

"I do not know about the princes; but the Knights of the Cross are ready to become friends even with the Tartars and attack us from the other side."

"Then we shall have a war!" exclaimed Zbyszko.
"I am against the Krzyzaks!"

But the other knights began to contradict Zyndram. "The Knights of the Cross have no fear of God, and they seek only their own advantage; but they will not help the pagans against Christian people. And then Tymur is at war somewhere in Asia, and the commander of the Tartars, Edyga, lost so heavily in the battle, that he is afraid even of victory. Prince Witold is a man full of expedients, and you may be sure he took precautions; and even if this time the Lithuanians were not successful, at any rate it is not a new thing for them to overcome the Tartars."

"We have to fight for life and death; not with the Tartars but with the Germans," said Zyndram of Maszkow, "and if we do not crush them, our peril will come from them."

Then he turned toward Zbyszko:

"And in the first place Mazowsze will perish. You will always find plenty to do there; be not afraid!"

"Hej! if my uncle were well, I would go there immediately."

"God help you!" said Powala, raising a glass.

"Yours and Danusia's health!"

"To the destruction of the Germans!" added Zyndram of Maszkow.

Then they began to say farewell. At that moment one of the princess' courtiers entered with a falcon on his arm; and having bowed to the knights who were present, he turned with a peculiar smile to Zbyszko:

"The lady princess wished me to tell you," said he, "that she will stay in Krakow over night, and will start on the journey to-morrow."

"That is well," said Zbyszko; "but why? Is anybody sick?"

"No. But the princess has a visitor from Mazowsze."

"The prince himself?"

"Not the prince, but Jurand of Spychow," answered the courtier.

Having heard this, Zbyszko became very much confused, and his heart began to throb as it did when they read the sentence of death to him.

CHAPTER II.

PRINCESS ANNA was not much surprised at the arrival of Jurand of Spychow. It used to happen, that during the continual attacks and fights with neighboring German knights, a sudden longing for Danusia seized him. Then he would appear unexpectedly in Warszawa, in Ciechanow, or wherever Prince Janusz's court was situated for the time being.

Every time he saw the child, his grief burst forth anew because Danusia looked like her mother. The people thought that his iron heart filled with feelings of vengeance, would become softer through such grief. The princess often tried to persuade him to abandon his bloody Spychow, and remain at the court near Danusia. The prince himself, appreciating his bravery and importance, and at the same time wishing to spare him the fatigue inevitable in the quarrels on the frontier, offered him the office of sword bearer. It was always in vain. The sight of Danusia opened the old wounds in his heart. After a few days he always lost his appetite, could not sleep, and became silent. Evidently his heart began to bleed, and finally he would disappear from the court and returned to the marshes of Spychow, in order to drown in blood his grief and anger. Then the people used to say: "Woe to the Germans! It is true they are not sheep; but they are sheep to Jurand, because he is a wolf to them." In fact, after a time, the news would spread about the

volunteers who, going to join the Knights of the Cross, were captured on their journey; about burned towns, and captured peasants; or about deadly fights from which the terrible Jurand always emerged victorious. On account of the rapacious disposition of the Mazurs and of the German knights who were holding the land and the strongholds from the Order, even during the greatest peace between the prince of Mazowsze and the Order, continual fighting was going on near the frontier. Even when cutting wood in the forests or harvesting in the fields, the inhabitants used to carry their arms. The people living there felt no certainty for the morrow; were in continual readiness for war, and were hard-hearted. Nobody was satisfied with defence only; but for pillage repaid with pillage; for conflagration, with conflagration; for invasion, with invasion. It often happened that while the Germans were stealing through the forest, to attack some stronghold and to seize the peasants or the cattle, at the same time, the Mazurs were doing the same. Sometimes they met, then they fought; but often only the leaders challenged each other for a deadly fight, after which the conqueror took the retinue of his defeated adversary. Therefore, when complaints were received at the Warsavian court about Jurand, the prince used to reply with complaints about the attacks made by the Germans. Thus both sides asked for justice, but neither was willing to grant it; all robberies, conflagrations and invasions went unpunished.

But Jurand dwelling in Spychow, surrounded by marshes overgrown with rushes, and being filled with an unquenchable desire for vengeance, was so

dreaded by his German neighbors, that finally their fear became greater than their courage. The lands bordering upon Spychow, were lying fallow; the forests were overgrown with wild hops and the meadows with reeds. Several German knights tried to settle in the neighborhood of Spychow; but everyone of them after a time, preferred to abandon his estate held in fief, his herds and his peasants, rather than live near this implacable man. Very often the knights planned a common expedition against Spychow; but everyone ended in defeat. They tried different means. One time they brought from the province of Mein, a knight noted for his strength and cruelty, and who had always been victorious in all fights. He challenged Jurand. But as soon as they entered the lists, the German was so frightened at the sight of the dreadful Mazur, that he wheeled his horse intending to flee; Jurand pierced his defenceless back with a spear, and in that way dishonored him forever. After that still greater fear filled the neighbors, and if a German perceived even from afar Spychowian smoke, he immediately crossed himself and began to pray to his patron in heaven. It was generally believed that Jurand had sold his soul to the evil one for the sake of vengeance.

The people told dreadful tales about Spychow: they said that the path leading to it through the quaggy marshes which were overgrown with duck weed and had bottomless depths, was so narrow that two men on horseback could not ride abreast; that on each side there were many Germans' bones, and that during the night, the heads of drowned men were seen walking on spiders' legs, howling and drawing travelers on horses into the depths.

They also said that the gate in the *grodek* was ornamented with skeletons. These stories were not true. But in the barred pits dug under the house in Spychow, there were always many groaning prisoners; and Jurand's name was more dreadful than those tales about the skeletons and drowned people.

Zbyszko having learned of Jurand's arrival, hastened to him, but with a certain uneasiness in his heart because he was Danusia's father. Nobody could forbid him choose Danusia for the lady of his thoughts; but afterward the princess had betrothed them. What will Jurand say to that? Will he consent? What will happen if he refuse his consent? These questions filled his heart with fear, because he now cared for Danusia more than for anything else in the world. He was only encouraged by the thought that perhaps Jurand would praise him for having attacked Lichtenstein, because he had done it to avenge Danusia's mother; and in consequence had nearly lost his own head.

In the meantime he began to question the courier, who had come to Amylej's for him:

"Where are you conducting me?" asked he; "to the castle?"

"Yes, to the castle. Jurand is with the princess' court."

"Tell me, what kind of a man he is, so that I may know how to talk with him!"

"What can I tell you! He is a man entirely different from other men. They say that he was mirthful before his blood became scared in his heart!"

"Is he clever?"

"He is cunning; he robs others but he does not let others rob him. Hej! He has only one eye,

because the other was destroyed by the thrust of a German crossbow ; but with that one, he can look a man through and through. He loves no one except the princess, our lady ; and he loves her because his wife was a lady from her court, and now his daughter is with her."

Zbyszko breathed.

"Then you think that he will not oppose the princess' will?"

"I know what you would like to learn, and therefore I will tell you what I heard. The princess spoke to him about your betrothment, because it would not be proper to conceal it from him ; but it is not known what he said in reply."

While thus speaking, they arrived at the gate. The captain of the archers, the same who had conducted Zbyszko to the scaffold, now saluted them. After having passed the guards, they entered the court-yard and turned to the left toward the part of the castle occupied by the princess.

The courtier meeting a servant in the doorway, asked :

"Where is Jurand of Spychow?"

"In the '*krzywy*'¹ room' with his daughter."

"It is there," said the courtier, pointing at the door.

Zbyszko crossed himself, raised the curtain in the doorway, and entered with throbbing heart. But he did not perceive Jurand and Danusia at once, because the room was not only "crooked" but dark also. But after a while he saw the fair head of the girl, who was sitting on her father's lap. They did not hear him when he entered ; therefore he stopped near the door, and finally he said :

¹ Crooked.

"May He be blessed!"

"For ages and ages," answered Jurand, rising.

At that moment Danusia sprang toward the young knight and having seized him with both hands, began to scream:

"Zbyszkul *Tatus*¹ is here!"

Zbyszko kissed her hands; then he approached Jurand, and said:

"I came to bow to you; you know who I am."

And he bent slightly, making a movement with his hands as if he wished to seize Jurand by his knees. But Jurand grasped his hand, turned him toward the light and began to look at him.

Zbyszko had already regained his self-possession; therefore he looked with curiosity at Jurand. He beheld before him a gigantic man with fallow hair and moustache, with a face pitted with smallpox and one eye of iron-like color. It seemed to him as if this eye would pierce him, and he again became confused. Finally, not knowing what to say, but wishing to say something to break the embarrassing silence, he asked:

"Then you are Jurand of Spychow, Danusia's father?"

But the other only pointed to an oaken bench, standing beside the chair on which he sat himself and continued to look at Zbyszko, who finally became impatient, and said:

"It is not pleasant for me to sit as though I were in a court."

Then Jurand said:

"You wanted to fight with Lichtenstein?"

"Yes!" answered Zbyszko.

¹ Polish *tata* =papa; hence the diminutive and endearing terms: *tatus*, *tatutu* and *tatutku*—"dear papa," "dear little papa," etc.

In the eye of the Lord of Spychow shone a strange light and his stern face began to brighten. After awhile he looked at Danusia and asked:

"And was it for her?"

"For no other! My uncle told you that I made a vow to her to tear the peacock tufts from German heads. But now there shall be not only three of them, but at least as many as I have fingers on both hands. In that way I will help you to avenge the death of Danusia's mother."

"Woe to them!" answered Jurand.

Then there was silence again. But Zbyszko, having noticed that by showing his hatred of the Germans, he would capture Jurand's heart, said:

"I will not forgive them! They nearly caused my death."

Here he turned to Danusia and added:

"She saved me."

"I know," said Jurand.

"Are you angry?"

"Since you made a vow to her, you must serve her, because such is the knightly custom."

Zbyszko hesitated; but after awhile, he began to say with evident uneasiness:

"Do you know that she covered my head with her veil? All the knights and also the Franciscan who was with me holding the cross, heard her say: 'He is mine!' Therefore I will be loyal to her until death, so help me God!"

Having said this, he kneeled, and wishing to show that he was familiar with the customs of chivalry, he kissed both of Danusia's shoes with great reverence. Then he arose and having turned to Jurand, asked him:

"Have you ever seen another as fair as she?"

Jurand suddenly put his hands behind his head, and having closed his eyes, he said loudly :

" I have seen one other ; but the Germans killed her."

" Then listen," said Zbyszko, enthusiastically ;
" we have the same wrong and the same vengeance. Those dog-brothers also killed my people from Bogdaniec. You cannot find a better man for your work. It is no new thing for me ! Ask my uncle. I can fight either with spear or axe, short sword or long sword ! Did my uncle tell you about those Fryzjans ? I will slaughter the Germans for you like sheep ; and as for the girl, I vow to you on my knees that I will fight for her even with the *starosta* of hell himself, and that I will give her up neither for lands nor for herds, nor for any other thing ! Even if some one offered me a castle with glass windows in it but without her, I would refuse the castle and follow her to the end of the world."

Jurand sat for awhile with his head between his hands ; but finally he awakened as from a dream, and said with sadness and grief :

" I like you, young man, but I cannot give her to you ; she is not destined for you, my poor boy."

Zbyszko hearing this, grew dumb and began to look at Jurand with wondering eyes.

But Danusia came to his help. Zbyszko was dear to her, and she was pleased to be considered not " a bush " but " a grown-up girl." She also liked the betrothal and the dainties which the knight used to bring her every day ; therefore when she understood that she was likely to lose all this, she slipped down from the arm chair and having put her head on her father's lap, she began to cry :

"*Tatulu, Tatulu!*"¹ He evidently loved her better than anything else, for he put his hand softly on her head, while from his face disappeared all trace of deadly grudge and anger; only sadness remained.

In the meantime Zbyszko recovered his composure, and now said:

"How is it? Do you wish to oppose God's will?"

To this Jurand replied:

"If it be God's will, then you will get her; but I cannot give you my consent. Bah! I would be glad to do it, but I cannot."

Having said this, he arose, took Danusia in his arms, and went toward the door. When Zbyszko tried to detain him, he stopped for a moment and said:

"I will not be angry with you if you render her knightly services: but do not ask me any questions, because I cannot tell you anything."

And he went out.

¹ Another form of diminutive from *tata*-father.

CHAPTER III.

THE next day Jurand did not avoid Zbyszko at all; and he did not prevent him from performing for Danusia, during the journey, those different services which, being her knight, he was obliged to render her. On the contrary, Zbyszko noticed that the gloomy *Pan* of Spychow looked at him kindly, as if he were regretting that he had been obliged to refuse his request. The young *wlodyka* tried several times to have some conversation with him. After they started from Krakow, there were plenty of opportunities during the journey, because both accompanied the princess on horseback; but as soon as Zbyszko endeavored to learn something about the secret difficulties separating him from Danusia, the conversation was suddenly ended.

Jurand's face became gloomy, and he looked at Zbyszko uneasily as if he were afraid he would betray himself.

Zbyszko thought that perhaps the princess knew what the obstacle was; so having an opportunity to speak to her privately, he inquired; but she could not tell him anything.

"Certainly there is some secret," she said. "Jurand himself told me that; but he begged me not to question him further, because he not only did not wish to tell what it was, but he could not. Surely he must be bound by some oath, as so often happens among the knights. But God will help us and everything will turn out well."

"Without Danusia I will be as unhappy as a chained dog or a bear in a ditch," answered Zbyszko. "There will be neither joy nor pleasure, nothing but sorrow and sighing; I will go against the Tartars with Prince Witold and may they kill me there. But first I must accompany uncle to Bogdaniec, and then tear from German heads the peacock's tufts as I promised. Perhaps the Germans will kill me; and I prefer such a death rather than to live and see some one else take Danusia."

The princess looked at him with her kind blue eyes, and asked him, with a certain degree of astonishment:

"Then you would permit it?"

"I? As long I have breath in my nostrils, it will not happen, unless my hand be paralyzed, and I be unable to hold my axe!"

"Then you see!"

"Bah! But how can I take her against her father's will?"

To this the princess said, as to herself:

"Does it not happen that way sometimes?"

Then to Zbyszko:

"God's will is stronger than a father's will. What did Jurand say to you? He said to me 'If it be God's will, then he will get her.'"

"He said the same to me!" exclaimed Zbyszko.

"Do you not see?"

"It is my only consolation, gracious lady."

"I will help you, and you can be sure of Danusia's constancy. Only yesterday I said to her: 'Danusia, will you always love Zbyszko?' And she answered: 'I will be Zbyszko's and no one else's.' She is still a green berry, but when she promises anything, she keeps her word, because

she is the daughter of a knight. Her mother was like her."

"Thank God!" said Zbyszko.

"Only remember to be faithful to her also; man is inconstant; he promises to love one faithfully, and afterward he promises another."

"May Lord Jesus punish me if I prove such!" exclaimed Zbyszko energetically.

"Well, remember then. And after you have conveyed your uncle to Bogdaniec, come to our court; there will be some opportunity then for you to win your spurs; then we will see what can be done. In the meanwhile Danusia will mature, and she will feel God's will; although she loves you very much even now, it is not the same love a woman feels. Perhaps Jurand will give his consent, because I see he likes you. You can go to Spychow and from there can go with Jurand against the Germans; it may happen that you will render him some great service and thus gain his affection."

"Gracious princess, I have thought the same; but with your sanction it will be easier."

This conversation cheered Zbyszko. Meanwhile at the first baiting place, old Macko became worse, and it was necessary to remain until he became better. The good princess, Anna Danuta, left him all the medicine she had with her; but she was obliged to continue her journey; therefore both *wlodykas* of Bogdaniec bid those belonging to the Mazovian court farewell. Zbyszko prostrated himself at the princess' feet, then at Danusia's; he promised her once more to be faithful and to meet her soon at Ciechanow or at Warszawa; finally he seized her in his strong arms, and having lifted her, he repeated with a voice full of emotion.

"Remember me, my sweetest flower! Remember me, my little golden fish!"

Danusia embraced him as though he were a beloved brother, put her little cheek to his face and wept copiously.

"I do not want to go to Ciechanow without Zbyszko; I do not want to go to Ciechanow!"

Jurand saw her grief, but he was not angry. On the contrary, he bid the young man good-bye kindly; and after he had mounted, he turned toward him once more, and said:

"God be with you; do not bear ill will toward me."

"How can I feel ill will toward you; you are Danusia's father!" answered Zbyszko cordially; then he bent to his stirrup, and the old man shook hands with him, and said:

"May God help you in everything! Understand?"

Then he rode away. But Zbyszko understood that in his last words, he wished him success; and when he went back to the wagon on which Macko was lying, he said:

"Do you know I believe he is willing; but something hinders him from giving his consent. You were in Spychow and you have good common sense, try to guess what it is."

But Macko was too ill. The fever increased so much toward evening, that he became delirious. Therefore instead of answering Zbyszko, he looked at him as if he were astonished; then he asked:

"Why do they ring the bells?"

Zbyszko was frightened. He feared that if the sick man heard the sound of bells, it was a sign that death would soon come. He feared also that

the old man might die without a priest and without confession, and therefore go, if not to hell, then at least for long centuries to purgatory ; therefore he determined to resume their journey, in order to reach, as soon as possible, some parish in which Macko could receive the last sacraments.

Consequently they started and traveled during the night. Zbyszko sat in the wagon on the hay, beside the sick man and watched him till day-break. From time to time he gave him wine to drink. Macko drank it eagerly, because it relieved him greatly. After the second quart he recovered from his delirium ; and after the third, he fell asleep ; he slept so well that Zbyszko bent toward him from time to time, to ascertain if he was still alive.

Until the time of his imprisonment in Krakow, he did not realize how dearly he loved this uncle who replaced, for him, father and mother. But now he realized it very well ; and he felt that after his uncle's death, life would be very lonesome for him, alone, without relatives, except the abbot who held Bogdaniec in pledge, without friends and without anyone to help him. The thought came to him that if Macko died, it would be one more reason for vengeance on the Germans, by whose means he had nearly lost his head, by whom all his forefathers had been killed, also Danusia's mother and many other innocent people, whom he knew or about whom he had heard from his acquaintances—and he began to say to himself :

“ In this whole kingdom, there is no man who has not suffered some wrong from them, and who would not like to avenge those wrongs.” Here he remembered the Germans with whom he fought at

Wilno, and he knew that even the Tartars were less cruel.

The coming dawn interrupted his thoughts. The day was bright but cold. Evidently Macko felt better, because he was breathing more regularly and more quietly. He did not awaken until the sun was quite warm; then he opened his eyes and said:

"I am better. Where are we?"

"We are approaching Olkusk. You know, where they dig silver."

"If one could get that which is in the earth, then one could rebuild Bogdaniec!"

"I see you are better," answered Zbyszko laughing. "Hej! it would be enough even for a stone castle! We will go to the *fara*,¹ because there the priests will offer us hospitality and you will be able to make your confession. Everything is in God's hands; but it is better to have one's conscience clear."

"I am a sinner and will willingly repent," answered Macko. "I dreamed last night that the devils were taking my skin off. They were talking German. Thanks be to God that I am better. Have you slept any?"

"How could I sleep, when I was watching you?"

"Then lie down for a while. When we arrive, I will awaken you."

"I cannot sleep!"

"What prevents you?"

Zbyszko looked at his uncle and said:

"What else can it be, if not love? I have pain

¹Church with certain special privileges. It is a popular expression for the church called *collegiata*, in Latin.

in my heart; but I will ride on horseback for a while, that will help me."

He got down from the wagon, and mounted the horse, which his servant brought for him; meanwhile, Macko touched his sore side; but he was evidently thinking about something else and not about his illness, because he tossed his head, smacked his lips and finally said:

"I wonder and wonder, and I cannot wonder enough, why you are so eager for love, because your father was not that way, and neither am I."

But Zbyszko, instead of answering, stretched himself on the saddle, put his hands on his hips, gave his head a toss and sang:

"I cried the whole night, cried in the morning,
Where have you been, my sweet girl, my darling!
It will not help me, if I mourn for thee,
Because I am quite sure, you will not see me."

"Hej!"

This "hej" resounded in the forest, reverberated against the trunks of the trees, finally reëchoed in the far distance and then was lost in the thickets.

Again Macko felt his side, in which the German spearhead had lodged and said, moaning a little:

"Formerly the people were wiser!"

Then he became thoughtful, as if recollecting the old times; and he added:

"Although even then some of them were stupid also."

But, in the meantime, they emerged from the forest, behind which they perceived the miners' sheds, and further walls, built by King Kazimierz, and the tower of the *fara* erected by Wladyslaw Lokietek.

The canon of the *fara* heard Macko's confession and offered them hospitality; they remained there over night, and started the next morning. Beyond Olkusk, they turned toward Szlonsk,¹ and on its boundaries, they proposed to ride toward Wielkopolska. The road was laid out through a large forest, in which there was heard toward sunset, the roaring of the urus and of the bison, and during the night the eyes of wolves were seen shining behind the thick hazelnut trees. But the greatest danger which threatened the traveler on this road, was from the German and Germanized knights of Szlonsk, whose castles were erected here and there near the boundaries. It is true, that because of the war with the Opolczyk, Naderspraw, whom the Silesians were helping against King Wladyslaw, the majority of these castles had been destroyed by Polish hands; it was necessary, however, to be watchful, and especially after sunset, and to have one's weapons ready.

They were riding so quietly, however, that Zbyszko found the journey tedious; when they were about one day's journey from Bogdaniec, they heard the snorting and trampling of horses behind them.

"Some people are following us," said Zbyszko.

Macko, who was awake, looked at the stars and answered like an experienced traveler:

"Day-break is near. Robbers do not attack toward the end of the night."

Zbyszko stopped the wagon, however, placed the men across the road, facing the advancing horses, and waited.

In fact, after a certain time he perceived in the

¹ Silesia.

dusk, several horsemen. One of them was riding ahead, and it was evident that he did not wish to hide, because he was singing. Zbyszko could not hear the words of the song; but the gay "hoc! hoc!" with which the stranger ended each refrain, reached his ears.

"Our people!" he said to himself.

After a while he shouted, however:

"Stop!"

"And you sit down!" answered a joyous voice.

"Who are you?"

"And you?"

"Why do you follow us?"

"And why do you obstruct the road?"

"Answer, our crossbows are bent."

"And ours,—thrust out,—aimed!"

"Answer like a man, otherwise woe to you!"

To this a merry song was given, as an answer to Zbyszko.

"One misery with another
They are dancing on the crossway.
Hoc! Hoc! Hoc!
What use have they of dancing?
It's a good thing, anyhow.
Hoc! Hoc! Hoc!"

Zbyszko was amazed at hearing such an answer; meantime, the song stopped and the same voice asked:

"And how is the old man Macko? Does he still breathe?"

Macko rose in the wagon and said:

"For God's sake, they are some of our people!"

Zbyszko rushed forward.

"Who asks about Macko?"

"A neighbor. Zych of Zgorzelice. I have looked for you for a week and inquired about you from all on the road."

"*Rety!*¹ Uncle! Zych of Zgorzelice is here!" shouted Zbyszko.

They began to greet each other joyfully because Zych was really their neighbor, and also a good man of whom everybody was very fond on account of his mirth.

"Well, how are you?" asked he, shaking hands with Macko. "Still *hoc*, or no more *hoc*!"²

"Hej, no more *hoc*!" answered Macko. "But I see you gladly. Gracious God, it is as if I were already in Bogdaniec."

"What is the matter with you; I heard that the Germans had wounded you?"

"They did, dog-brothers! A head of a spear stuck between my ribs."

"You see!" said Zbyszko, "everybody advises the grease of a bear. As soon as we reach Bogdaniec, I will go with an axe to the *barcie*."³

"Perhaps Jagienka has some."

"What Jagienka? Your wife's name was Malgochna," said Macko.

"O! Malgochna is no more! It will be three years on St. Michael's day since Malgochna was buried in the priests' field. She was a sturdy woman; may the Lord make his face shine upon her soul! Jagienka is exactly like her, only younger."

¹ A popular exclamation of joy—sometimes of distress if it is put with another word.

² An exclamation of mirth, especially in songs; and while dancing, they exclaim in Poland: *hoc! hoc!*

³ Wooden beehive excavated in a tree.

"Behind a ravine, there is a mount,
As was mother, such is daughter.
Hoc! Hoc!"

"I told Malgochna not to climb the pine tree because she was no longer young. But she would climb it. The branch broke; she fell and was badly hurt; within three days, she died."

"Lord, make your face shine upon her soul!" said Macko. "I remember, I remember! When she was angry, the farm boys used to hide in the hay. But she was clever. So she fell from a pine tree!"

"She fell down like a cone. Do you know, after the funeral I was so stupefied with grief, that for three days they could not arouse me. They thought I was dead. Afterward, I wept for a long time. But Jagienka is also clever. She takes care of everything."

"I can scarcely remember her. She was not as large as the helve of an axe when I went away. She could pass under a horse without touching its body. Bah! that is a long time ago, and she must have grown."

"She was fifteen the day of St. Agnes; but I have not seen her for more than a year."

"Why have you not seen her? Where have you been?"

"To the war. I do not need to stay home; Jagienka takes care of everything."

Macko, although ill, began to listen attentively when the war was mentioned, and asked:

"Perhaps you were with *Kniaz* Witold at Worskla?"

"Yes, I was there," answered Zych of Zgorzelice gaily. "Well, the Lord God did not send him good luck; we were dreadfully defeated by Edyga.

First they killed our horses. A Tartar will not attack you openly like a Christian knight, but throws his arrows from afar. You attack him and he flees, and then again throws his arrows. What can you do with such a man? In our army the knights boasted and said: 'We do not need to lower our spears, nor draw our swords; we will crush the vermin under our horses' feet.' So they boasted; but when the arrows began to twange, it grew dark they were so numerous, and the battle was soon over. Hardly one out of ten survived. Will you believe it? More than half of the army were slain; seventy Lithuanian and Russian princes lay dead on the battlefield; and one could not count in two weeks' time, the *bojars* and other courtiers, whom they call *otroks*, that were killed."

"I heard about it," interrupted Macko. "Many of our knights perished also."

"Bah! even ten Knights of the Cross were killed, because they were obliged to serve in Witold's army. Many of our people perished, because they, you know, never run away. *Kniaz* Witold had the greatest confidence in our knights and he wanted a guard of them round him during the battle, exclusively Poles. Hi! Hi! Great havoc was made among them; but he was not touched! *Pan* Spytko of Mielsztyn was killed, also the sword bearer, Bernat, Judge Mikolaj, Prokop, Przeclaw, Dobrogost, Jasko of Lazewice, Pilik Mazur, Warsz of Michow, *Wojewoda* Socha, Jasko of Dombrowa, Pietrko of Miloslaw, Szczepiecki, Oder-ski and Tomko Lagoda. Who can enumerate all of them! Some of them had been hit with so many arrows, that after death they looked like porcupines; it was awful to look at them!"

Here he laughed as if he were telling a most amusing story, and at once he began to sing :

“ You have learned what is a Tartar,
When he beat you and flew afar ! ”

“ Well, and what then ? ” asked Zbyszko.

“ Then the grand duke escaped ; but he was as courageous as he usually is. The more you press him, the farther he jumps, like a hazelnut stick. We rushed to the Tavanian ford to defend those crossing over. There were with us a few knights from Poland. The second day, Edyga came with a swarm of Tartars ; but he could not do a thing. Hej ! When he wanted to pass the ford, we fought him so hard he could not do it. We killed and caught many of them. I myself caught five Tartars, and I sent them to Zgorzelice. You will see what dogheads they have.”

“ In Krakow, they say that the war may reach Poland also.”

“ Do they think Edyga is a fool ! He knows well what kind of knights we have ; and he also knows that the greatest knights remained home, because the queen was not pleased when Witold began the war on his own authority. Ej, he is cunning, that old Edyga ! He understood at Tavanian that the prince's army had increased and had gone far beyond the tenth-land ! ”

“ But you returned ? ”

“ Yes, I returned. There is nothing to do there. In Krakow I heard about you, and that you had started a little ahead of me.”

Here he turned to Zbyszko :

“ Hej ! my lord, the last time I saw you, you were a small boy ; and now, although there is no

light, I suppose you are large like an urus. And you had your crossbows ready! One can see you have been in the war."

"War has nurtured me since childhood. Let my uncle tell you if I am lacking in experience."

"It is not necessary for your uncle to tell me anything; in Krakow, I saw the *Pan* of Taczew who told me about you. But I understand that the Mazur does not want to give you his daughter. I have nothing against you; but I like you. You will forget about that one when you see my Jagienka. She is a wonder!"

"I shall not forget, even if I see ten such as your Jagna."

"She will get the estate of Moczydoly for her dowry. Many will ask me for Jagna, do not fear?"

Zbyszko wanted to answer: "But not I!" But Zych of Zgorzelice began to sing:

"I will bend to your knees
And you for that, will give me the girl,
Give me the girl!"

"You are always happy and singing," said Macko.

"Well, and what do the blessed do in heaven."

"They sing."

"Well, then! And the ~~dear~~ cry. I prefer to go to those who sing rather than to those who cry; and St. Peter will say thus: 'We must let him into paradise; otherwise he will sing in hell, and that will not be right.' Look, the day breaks!"

In fact, daylight was coming. After awhile they arrived at a large glade. By the lake covering the greater part of the glade, some people were

fishing; but seeing the armed men, they left their nets and immediately seized their picks and staffs and stood ready for battle.

"They thought we were robbers," said Zych, laughing. "Hej, fishermen! To whom do you belong?"

They stood for a while silently, looking distrustfully; but finally one of them having recognized that they were knights, answered:

"To the *ksiondz*, the abbot of Tuleza."

"Our relative," said Macko, "the same who holds Bogdaniec in pledge. These must be his forests; but he must have purchased them a short time ago."

"He did not buy them," answered Zych. "He was fighting about them with Wilk of Brzozowa and it seems that the abbot defeated Wilk. A year ago they were going to fight on horseback with spears and long swords for this part of the forest; but I do not know how it ended because I went away."

"Well, we are relatives," said Macko, "he will not quarrel with us."

"Perhaps; he is a chivalrous abbot who knows how to wear a helmet; but he is pious and he sings the mass beautifully. Don't you remember? When he shouts at mass, the swallows nested under the ceiling, fall from their nests. In that way God's glory increases."

"Certainly I remember! At ten steps he could blow the candles at the altar out. Has he been in Bogdaniec?"

"Yes, he was there. He settled five peasants on the land. He has also been at my house at Zgorzelice, because, as you know, he baptized

Jagienka, of whom he is very fond and calls her little daughter."

"God will bless him if he be willing to leave me the peasants," said Macko.

"*Owa!* what will five peasants amount to! Then Jagienka will ask him and he will not refuse her."

Here the conversation stopped for a while, because over the dark forest and from the pink down, the bright sun had risen and lighted the environs. The knights greeted it with the customary: "May it be blessed!" and then having made the sign of the cross, they began their morning prayers.

Zych finished first and said to his companions:

"I hope to see you well soon. Hej! you have both changed. You, Macko, must regain your health. Jagienka will take care of you, because there is no woman in your house. One can see that you have a piece of iron between your ribs."

Here he turned toward Zbyszko:

"Show yourself also. Well, mighty God! I remember you when you were small and used to climb on the colts by the help of their tails; and now, what a knight! The face looks like that of a little lord; but the body like that of a sturdy man. Such can wrestle even with a bear."

"A bear is nothing for him!" said Macko. "He was younger than he is to-day, when that Fryzjan called him a beardless youth; and he resenting it, immediately pulled out the Fryzjan's mustaches."

"I know," interrupted Zych, "and you fought afterward, and captured their retinue. *Pan* of Taczew told me all about it:"

"There came a German very proud,

He was buried with sore snout;

Hoc! Hoc!"

Zbyszko wondered at Zych's long thin figure, at his thin face with its enormous nose and at his laughing round eyes.

"O!" said he, "with such a neighbor there will be no sadness, if God only restore my uncle's health."

"It is good to have a joyful neighbor, because with a jolly fellow there will be no quarrel," answered Zych. "Now listen to what I tell you. You have been away from home a long time, and you will not find much comfort in Bogdaniec. I do not say in the farming, because the abbot has taken care of that; he dug up a large piece of the forest and settled new peasants. But as he went there very often, you will find the larder empty; even in the house, there is hardly a bench or a bunch of straw to sleep on; and a sick man needs some comforts. You had better come with me to Zgorzelice. I will be glad to have you stay a month or two. During that time, Jagienka will take care of Bogdaniec. Rely on her and do not bother yourselves with anything. Zbyszko can go there, from time to time, to inspect the farming; I will bring the abbot to Zgorzelice, and you can settle your account with him. The girl will take good care of you, as of a father, and during illness, a woman's care is the best. Well, my dear friends, will you do as I ask you?"

"We know that you are a good man and you always were," answered Macko with emotion; "but don't you see, if I must die on account of this wound, I prefer to die in my own home. Then when one is home, although he is old, he can inquire about different things, can inspect and do many other things. If God order me to go to the other world, well, then I cannot help it! I cannot

escape it even with better care. As for inconvenience, we are accustomed to that at the war. Even a bunch of straw is pleasant to that one who, during several years, has slept on the bare ground. But I thank you for your kind heart and if I be not able to show you my gratitude, God will permit Zbyszko to do it."

Zych of Zgorzelice, who was noted for his kind heart and readiness to oblige, began to insist; but Macko was firm: "If I must die, it will be better to die in my own court-yard!"

He had longed to see Bogdaniec for several years; therefore now, when he was so near it, he must go there, even if it were his last night. God was merciful, having permitted him who was so ill, to reach here.

He brushed away the tears gathered under his eyelids, with his hand, looked around and said:

"If these are the woods of Wilk of Brzozowa we will be home this afternoon."

"They do not belong to Wilk of Brzozowa any longer; but to the abbot," said Zych.

Macko smiled and said after awhile:

"If they belong to the abbot, then sometime, they may belong to us."

"Bah! awhile ago you were talking about death," said Zych joyfully, "and now you wish to outlive the abbot."

"No, I will not outlive him; but Zbyszko may."

Further conversation was interrupted by the sound of horns in the forest. Zych stopped his horse and began to listen.

"Somebody is hunting," said he. "Wait."

"Perhaps it is the abbot. It would be pleasant to meet him here."

"Keep quiet!"

Here he turned to his retinue.

"Stop!"

They halted. The horns resounded nearer, and soon afterward the baying of dogs was heard.

"Stop!" repeated Zych. "They are coming toward us."

Zbyszko jumped from his horse and began to shout:

"Give me the crossbow! The beast may attack us! Hasten! Hasten!"

Having seized the crossbow from the servant's hands, he rested it against the ground, pressed it against his abdomen, bent, stretched his back like a bow, and having seized the string with the fingers of both hands, he pulled it on to the iron hook; then placed an arrow and sprang into the woods.

"He stretched it without a crank!" whispered Zych, astonished at such great strength.

"Ho, he is a strong boy!" answered Macko, proudly.

Meanwhile, the sound of horns and the barking of dogs stole nearer; all at once, at the right side of the forest, a heavy trampling resounded, accompanied by the crackling of broken branches and bushes—then out of the thicket rushed an old bearded urus, with his gigantic head lowered, with bloody eyes and panting tongue, breathless and terrible. Coming to a small ravine, he leaped it, but fell on his forelegs; but immediately he arose, and a few seconds later he would have disappeared in the thicket on the other side of the road, when the string of the crossbow twanged, the whistling of the arrow resounded, the beast reared, turned, roared dread-

fully and fell on the ground as if he were struck by a thunderbolt.

Zbyszko leaped from behind a tree, again stretched the crossbow, and approached the bull who was pawing the ground with his hind feet.

But having glanced at it, he turned quietly toward the retinue, and began to shout from afar:

"I hit him so hard that he is severely wounded!"

"You are a strong boy!" said Zych, riding toward him, "with one arrow only!"

"Bah, it was near, and the speed was great. Come and see; not only the iron, but even the shaft has disappeared under the left shoulder bone."

"The huntsmen must be near; they will claim the beast."

"I will not give it to them!" answered Zbyszko. "It was killed on the road, and the road is not private property."

"But if it belong to the abbot?"

"Well, then he may have it."

Meanwhile, several dogs came out of the forest. Having perceived the animal, they rushed on him.

"Soon the huntsmen will appear," said Zych. "Look! There they are, but they do not see the beast yet. Stop! Stop! Here, here! Killed! Killed!"

Then he became silent, and sheltered his eyes with one hand; after a while, he said:

"For God's sake! what has happened? Have I become blind, or does it only seem so to me?"

"There is some one on a piebald horse in the front," said Zbyszko.

Then Zych exclaimed at once:

"Dear Jesus! It must be Jagienka!"

And he began to shout:

"Jagna! Jagna!"

Then he rushed forward; but before he could make his horse gallop, Zbyszko perceived a most wonderful spectacle; he beheld a girl sitting like a man, on a swift piebald horse, rushing toward them; she had a crossbow in one hand and a board-spear on her shoulders. Her floating hair was full of hop strobiles; her face was bright like the dawn. Her shirt was opened on the bosom, and she wore a *serdak*.¹ Having reached them, she reined in her horse; for a while, her face expressed surprise, hesitation, joy; finally, being scarcely able to believe her own eyes, she began to cry in a childish voice:

"*Tatulo*,² *tatus*,² dearest!"

In the twinkling of an eye, she jumped from her horse, and Zych dismounted also to welcome her; she threw her arms around his neck. For a long time, Zbyszko heard only the sounds of kisses and these two words: "*Tatulo! Jagula! Tatulo! Jagula!*" repeated in a joyful outburst.

Both retainers now approached, and Macko arrived also; they continued to repeat: "*Tatulo! Jagula!*" and still kissed each other. Finally Jagienka asked:

"Then you decided to return from the war? Are you well?"

"From the war. Why should I not be well? And you? And the boys? Are they well also? Yes, otherwise you would not run in the forest. But, my girl, what are you doing here?"

"Don't you see that I am hunting?" answered Jagienka, laughing.

¹ Kind of fur jacket—bolero.

² Both words are diminutives of *tata*—father.

"In somebody else's woods?"

"The abbot gave me permission. He even sent me experienced huntsmen and a pack of hounds."

Here she turned to the servants:

"Chase the dogs away, they will tear the skin!"

Then to Zych:

"Oj, how glad I am to see you!" And they again kissed each other. When they were through, Jagna said:

"We are far from home; we followed the beast. I am sure it must be more than ten miles; the horses are exhausted. What a large urus! Did you notice? He must have at least three of my arrows in him; the last one killed him."

"He was killed by the last, but it was not yours; this knight killed him."

Jagienka threw her hair back and looked at Zbyszko sharply, but not very friendly.

"Do you know who he is?" asked Zych.

"I do not know."

"No wonder you do not recognize him, because he has grown. Perhaps you will recognize old Macko of Bogdaniec?"

"For God's sake! is that Macko of Bogdaniec?" exclaimed Jagienka.

Having approached the wagon, she kissed Macko's hand.

"It is you?"

"Yes, it is I; but I am obliged to ride in the wagon, because the Germans wounded me."

"What Germans? The war was with the Tartars?"

"There was a war with the Tartars, but we were not in that war; we fought in the war in Lithuania, Zbyszko and I."

"Where is Zbyszko?"

"Then you did not recognize Zbyszko?" said Macko smiling.

"Is that man Zbyszko?" exclaimed the girl, looking again at the young knight.

"Yes, it is he."

"You must give him a kiss, because he is an old acquaintance of yours," said Zych, mirthfully.

Jagienka turned gaily toward Zbyszko; but suddenly she retreated, and having covered her eyes with her hand, she said:

"I am bashful."

"But we have known each other since we were children," said Zbyszko.

"Aha! we know each other well. I remember when you made us a visit with Macko about eight years ago, and my *matula*¹ gave us some nuts with honey; you being the elder, struck me with your fist and then ate all the nuts yourself."

"He will not act like that now!" said Macko. "He has been with *Kniaz* Witold, and with the court in Krakow, and he has learned courtly manners."

But Jagienka was now thinking about something else; turning toward Zbyszko, she asked:

"Then you killed the urus?"

"Yes."

"We must see where the arrow is."

"You cannot see it; it disappeared under the shoulder bone."

"Be quiet; do not dispute," said Zych. "We all saw him shoot the urus, and we saw something still better; he bent the bow without a crank."

¹ Diminutive of mother.

Jagienka looked at Zbyszko for the third time, but now with astonishment.

“ You bent the crossbow without a crank ? ”

Zbyszko, detecting some doubt in her voice, rested the crossbow on the ground, and bent it in the twinkling of an eye ; then wishing to show that he was familiar with knightly manners, he kneeled on one knee and handed the bow to Jagienka. But the girl, instead of taking it from him, suddenly blushed—she did not know why herself, and began to fasten the shirt, which, during the swift riding, had become opened on her bosom.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next day after their arrival at Bogdaniec, Macko and Zbyszko began to look around their old home; they soon realized that Zych of Zgorze-lice was right when he told them that at first they would be uncomfortable.

With the farming they could get along quite well. There were several fields cultivated by the peasants whom the abbot had settled there. Formerly there had been much cultivated land in Bogdaniec; but after the battle at Plowce¹ where the family Grady perished, there was a scarcity of working hands; and after the invasion of the Germans from Szlonsk and after the war of Nalenczs with Grzymalits, the formerly rich fields became overgrown with trees. Macko could not help it. In vain he tried for several years to bring farmers from Krzesnia and rent the land to them; they refused to come, preferring to remain on their own strips of land rather than to cultivate some one else's. His offer however attracted some shelterless men; in the different wars, he captured several slaves whom he married and settled in the houses; and in that way he populated the village. But it was hard work for him; therefore as soon as he had an opportunity, Macko pledged the whole of Bogdaniec, thinking that it would be easier for the powerful abbot to settle the land with peasants, and that the war would bring to him and to Zbyszko some people and money. In fact, the abbot was

¹ In 1331.

energetic. He had increased the working force of Bogdaniec with five peasant families ; he increased the stock of cattle and horses ; then he built a barn, a stable and a cow house. But as he did not live in Bogdaniec, he did not repair the house. Macko, who had hoped to find the *grodek* surrounded with a ditch and hedge when he returned, found everything just as he had left it, with this difference only, that the walls were more crooked and seemed to be lower, because they had settled deeper in the earth.

The house contained an enormous hall, two large rooms with alcoves, and a kitchen. In the rooms there were windows made of bladders ; and in the centre of each room, there was a fireplace made of lime, and the smoke escaped through a hole in the ceiling. From the ceilings now blackened from smoke, during former times used to hang the hams of boars, bears and deer, rumps of roes, sides of beef and rolls of sausages. But now the hooks were empty as well as the shelves fastened to the walls, on which they used to put the tin and earthen dishes. The walls beneath the shelves were no longer empty, however, because Zbyszko had ordered his servants to hang helmets, cuirasses, long swords and short swords on them ; and further along boar-spears and forks, caparisons and saddles. The smoke blackened the weapons, and it was necessary to clean them very often. But Macko, who was careful, ordered the servants to put the costly clothes in the alcove in which his bed stood.

In the front rooms there stood near the windows, pine tables and benches of the same, on which the lords used to sit during the meals, with all their

servants. People accustomed to war were easily satisfied; but in Bogdaniec there was neither bread nor flour and no dishes. The peasants brought what they could; Macko expected that the neighbors, as was then customary, would help him; and he was not mistaken, at least as far as Zych of Zgorzelice was concerned.

The second day, when the old *wlodyka* was sitting on a log in front of the house, delighted with the bright autumn day, Jagienka came, riding a black horse; she dismounted and approached Macko, out of breath on account of fast riding, and rosy as an apple; she said:

"May you be blessed! *Tatulo* sent me to inquire about your health."

"I am no worse," answered Macko; "and at least I have slept in my own house."

"But you cannot be comfortable at all, and a sick person needs some care."

"We are hardened people. It is true that at first there was no comfort; but we were not hungry. We ordered an ox and two sheep killed, so there is plenty of meat. The women brought some flour and eggs; the worst is that we have no dishes."

"Well, I ordered my servants to load two wagons. On one there are two beds and dishes, and on the other different provisions. There are some cakes and flour, some salt pork and dried mushrooms; there is a barrel of beer and one of mead; in fact a little of everything we had in the house."

Macko, who was grateful for this kindness, caressed Jagienka's head, and said:

"May God reward your father and you. When our housekeeping improves, we will return the provisions."

"How clever you are! We are not like the Germans, who take back what they give."

"Well, so much more may God reward you. Your father told us what a good housekeeper you are, and that you had taken care of Zgorzelice the whole year?"

"Yes! If you need anything else, send somebody; but send some one who will know what is needed, because a stupid servant never knows what he has been sent for."

Here Jagienka began to look round, and Macko having noticed it, smiled and asked:

"For whom are you looking?"

"I am looking for no one!"

"I will send Zbyszko to thank you and your father. Do you like Zbyszko?"

"I have not looked at him."

"Then look at him now, because he is just coming."

In fact Zbyszko was coming from the stable. He was dressed in a reindeer jacket and round felt cap like those worn under the helmets; his hair was without a net, cut evenly over his eyebrows and hung in golden curls on his shoulders; he walked swiftly, having noticed the girl; he was tall and graceful, looking like the shield-bearer of a rich nobleman.

Jagienka turned toward Macko as if to show that she came only to see him; but Zbyszko welcomed her joyfully, and having taken hold of her hand, raised it to his mouth, notwithstanding her resistance.

"Why do you kiss my hand?" asked she. "Am I a priest?"

"Such is the custom; you must not resist."

"Even if he had kissed both your hands," said Macko, "it would not be enough for all that you have brought us."

"What have you brought?" asked Zbyszko, looking around the court-yard; but he did not see anything except the black horse tied to the post.

"The wagons have not come yet; but they will soon be here," answered Jagienka.

Macko began to enumerate what she had brought; but when he mentioned the two beds, Zbyszko said:

"I am satisfied to sleep on the urus' skin; but I thank you because you thought about me also."

"It was not I; it was *Tatulo*," answered the girl, blushing. "If you prefer to sleep on the skin, you can do it."

"I prefer to sleep on what I can. Sometimes after a battle, I slept with a dead Krzyzak instead of a pillow under my head."

"You do not mean to tell me that you have ever killed a Krzyzak? I am sure you have not."

Zbyszko, instead of answering, began to laugh. But Macko exclaimed:

"For heaven's sake, girl, you do not know him yet! He has never done anything else, but kill the Germans. He can fight with an axe, a spear or with any weapon; and when he sees a German from afar, one must tie him with a rope, or else he will rush against him. In Krakow he wanted to kill the envoy, Lichtenstein, and for that he barely escaped execution. Such a man! I will tell you also about the two Fryzes, from whom we took their retinues and so much rich booty, that one could redeem Bogdaniec with half of it."

Here Macko began to tell about his duel with the Fryzjans; also about other adventures which had

happened to them, and about the deeds they had performed. How they had fought from behind the walls and in the open fields, with the greatest knights living in foreign lands; how they had fought Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen and Burgundians. He also told her what they had seen! They had seen German castles of red brick, Lithuanian wooden *grodzce*¹ and churches, more beautiful than one could see around Bogdaniec; also large cities and the dreadful wilderness in which during the nights Lithuanian gods cried, and many different, marvelous things; and everywhere, in any fight, Zbyszko was victorious, so that even the greatest knights were astonished at him.

Jagienka, who was sitting on the log beside Macko, listened with open mouth to that narrative, tossing her head and looking at the young knight with increasing admiration and amazement. Finally when Macko was through, she sighed and said:

"I am sorry I was not born a boy!"

But Zbyszko, who during the narration had been looking at her attentively, evidently was thinking about something else, because he suddenly said:

"What a beautiful girl you are now!"

Jagienka answered, half in displeasure and half in sadness:

"You have seen many more beautiful than I am."

But Zbyszko could truly answer her that he had not seen many as pretty as she, because Jagienka was beaming with health, youth and strength. The old abbot used to say that she looked like a pine tree. Everything was beautiful in her; a slender

¹ Stronghold—castle.

figure, a broad bosom that looked as if it were cut out of marble, a red mouth, and intelligent blue eyes. She was also dressed with more care than when in the forest with the hunting party. Around her neck she had a necklace of red beads; she wore a fur jacket opened in front and covered with green cloth, a homespun skirt and new boots. Even old Macko noticed this beautiful attire, and having looked at her for a moment, asked:

"Why are you dressed as if you were going to church?"

But instead of answering, she exclaimed:

"The wagons are coming!"

In fact the wagons now appeared and she sprang toward them, followed by Zbyszko. The unloading lasted quite a long time to the great satisfaction of Macko who looked at everything, and praised Jagienka all the time. It was dusk when the girl started home. While she was getting ready to mount her horse, Zbyszko suddenly caught her, and before she was able to say a word, lifted her into the saddle. Then she blushed like the dawn and turning her head toward him, said with emotion in her voice:

"What a strong boy you are!"

But he, not having noticed her confusion nor her blushes because it was dark, laughed and said:

"Are you not afraid of wild beasts? It is night!"

"There is a boar-spear in the wagon. Give it to me."

Zbyszko went to the wagon, took the boar-spear and handed it to Jagienka; then he said:

"Be in good health!"

"Be in good health!" she answered.

"May God reward you! To-morrow, or the day after, I will be in Zgorzelice to thank Zych and you for your kindness."

"Come! You will be welcome!"

Having touched her horse, she disappeared among the bushes growing on the sides of the road.

Zbyszko returned to his uncle.

"You must go inside."

But Macko answered, without moving from the log:

"Hej! what a girl! She made the court-yard brighter!"

"That is true!"

There was a moment of silence. Macko seemed to be thinking about something while looking at the stars; then he said, as if he were speaking to himself:

"She is pretty and a good housekeeper, although she is not more than fifteen years old."

"Yes!" answered Zbyszko. "Therefore old Zych loves her dearly."

"And he said that the estate of Moczydoly will be her dowry; and there on the pastures is a herd of mares with many colts."

"Are there not a great many marshes in the Moczydowski estate?"

"Yes; but in those marshes there are plenty of beavers."

There was silence again. Macko looked intently at Zbyszko for a while, and finally he asked

"About what are you thinking?"

"Seeing Jagienka reminded me of Danusia, and something pricked me in the heart."

"Let us go into the house," answered the old *włodyka*. "It is getting late."

Having risen with difficulty, he leaned on Zbyszko, who conducted him to the alcove.

The next day Zbyszko went to Zgorzelice, because Macko urged him. He also insisted that he take two servants with him for ostentation, and that he dress in his best clothes, to show respect and gratitude to Zych. Zbyszko did as he was asked and went attired as if for a wedding, in his *jaka* made of white satin, bordered with gold fringe and embroidered with gold griffins. Zych received him with open arms, with joy and with singing; as for Jagienka, when she entered, she stopped as if she were rooted to the ground and almost dropped the bucket of wine which she was carrying; she thought that a son of some king had arrived. She became timid and sat silently, rubbing her eyes from time to time as if she would like to awaken from a dream. The inexperienced Zbyszko thought that, for some reason unknown to him, she did not wish to talk to him; therefore he conversed only with Zych, praising his munificence and admiring the house at Zgorzelice, which in fact was quite different from that in Bogdaniec.

Everywhere comfort and wealth were evident. In the rooms there were windows with panes made of horn, cut in thin slices and polished so that it was as transparent as glass. Instead of fireplaces in the centre, there were large chimneys in the corners. The floors were made of larch tree planks, while on the walls were hung suits of armor and many polished dishes, also silver spoons. Here and there were costly rugs brought from the wars. Under the tables there were enormous ursus' skins. Zych showed his riches willingly, saying that it was Jagienka's household. He conducted Zbyszko

to the alcove, fragrant with rosin and peppermint, in which were hanging from the ceiling, large bunches of wolf skins, fox skins, beaver skins and marten skins. He showed to him the provisions of cheese, honey, wax, barrels of flour, pails of dried bread, hemp and dried mushrooms. Then he went with him to the granaries, barns, stables, cow houses, and to the sheds filled with plenty of hunting implements and nets. Zbyszko was so dazzled by all this wealth that during supper, he could not refrain from admiration.

"What a pleasure to live in Zgorzelice!" exclaimed he.

"In Moczydoly, there is almost the same wealth," answered Zych. "Do you remember Moczydoly? It is not far from Bogdaniec. Formerly our forefathers quarreled about the boundaries and challenged each other; but I shall not quarrel."

Here he filled Zbyszko's goblet with mead and said:

"Perhaps you would like to sing?"

"No," answered Zbyszko; "but I shall listen to you with pleasure."

"Zgorzelice will belong to the young bears."

"What do you mean by 'young bears?'"

"Why, Jagienka's brothers."

"Hej! they will not have to suck their paws during the winter."

"No; but Jagienka will also have plenty in Moczydoly."

"That is true!"

"Why don't you eat and drink? Jagienka, pour for him and for me."

"I am drinking and eating as much as I can."

"Ungird your belt; then you will be able to eat

and drink more. What a beautiful girdle you have! You must have taken rich booty in Lithuania!"

"We cannot complain," answered Zbyszko, gladly seizing the opportunity to explain that the heirs of Bogdaniec were no longer *wlodykas*. "A part of our booty, we sold in Krakow and received forty silver *grzywien* for it."

"You don't say so! Why, one can buy an estate for that."

"Yes. There was one Milanese armor which my uncle, expecting to die, sold for a good price."

"I know! Well, it is worth while to go to Lithuania. I wanted to go there also; but I was afraid."

"Of what? Of the Knights of the Cross?"

"Ej, who would be afraid of Germans? I was afraid of those heathenish gods or devils. It seems there are plenty of them in the woods."

"They do not have any other place for shelter, because their temples have been burned. Formerly they were well-to-do; but now they live on mushrooms and ants."

"Did you see them?"

"No, I did not see any myself; but I heard of people who had seen them. Sometimes one of them sticks out a hairy paw from behind a tree and shakes it, begging for something."

"Macko told me the same," answered Jagienka.

"Yes! He told me about it on the road," said Zych. "Well, no wonder! In our country also, although it has been a Christian country for a long time, one can hear laughter in the marshes; and although the priests scold about it in the churches, it is always good policy to put a dish filled with something to eat, for the little devils; otherwise

they will scratch on the walls so much that one can hardly sleep. Jagienka, my dearest! put a dish at the threshold."

Jagienka took an earthen porringer full of noodles and cheese, and placed it at the threshold. Zych said:

"The priests scold! But the Lord Jesus will not be angry about a dish of noodles; and a god, as soon as his hunger is satisfied, will protect one from fire and from thieves."

Then he turned to Zbyszko:

"But will you not ungird yourself and sing a little?"

"You had better sing, or perhaps *Panna*¹ Jagienka will sing."

"We will sing by turns," exclaimed Zych. "We have a servant who will accompany us on a wooden fife. Call the boy!"

They called the servant who sat down on the bench and put the fife to his mouth, waiting to learn whom he was to accompany.

None of them wanted to be first. Finally Zych told Jagienka to begin; therefore Jagienka, although bashful because Zbyszko was present, rose from the bench and having put her hands under her apron, began:

"If I only could get
The wings like a birdie,
I would fly quickly
To my dearest Jasiek."

Zbyszko opened his eyes wide; then he jumped up and shouted:

"Where did you learn that song?"

¹ Miss.

Jagienka looked at him astonished.

"Everybody sings that. What is the matter with you?"

Zych thinking that Zbyszko was a little intoxicated, turned his jovial face toward him and said:

"Ungird! It will relieve you!"

But Zbyszko stood for a while with astonishment on his face; then, having recovered from his emotion, said to Jagienka:

"Excuse me, I suddenly remembered something. Sing further."

"Perhaps it makes you sad?"

"Ej, not at all!" he answered, with a quivering voice. "I could listen to it the whole night."

Then he sat down, covered his face with his hand, and listened.

Jagienka sang another couplet; but when she finished, she noticed a big tear rolling down Zbyszko's fingers.

Then she sat down beside him, and began to touch him with her elbow.

"What is the matter with you? I do not want to make you cry. Tell me what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing! Nothing!" answered Zbyszko, sighing. "I could tell you much. But it is over. I feel merry now."

"Perhaps you would like to have some sweet wine?"

"Good girl!" exclaimed Zych. "Call him 'Zbyszko,' and you call her 'Jagienka.' You have known each other since you were children."

Then he turned toward his daughter:

"Do not mind because he struck you when you were children. He will not do it now."

"I will not," answered Zerkow, emphatically.
"If she will, she may have the coin for it."

Then Jaganke, trying to cheer him up, began to play that she was striking him with her little fist.

"Give us some idea," started the very Rev
of Zanzibar.

Jagadeeswari is the first and brought out a jug of wine, two beautiful silver goblets, engraved by a silversmith of "Wooten" and a couple of cheese.

Zyde, being a little intoxicated, began to hug the jug and said to me as if he were talking to his daughter:

"O, my dear girl! What shall I do, poor man, when they take you from Zingirine: what shall I do?"

"And you must give her up soon!" said Zerkow.

Zurück zu den Anfangen.

"Capt. Capt. T. L. L. is only fifteen, but she is already full of tricks. When she sees one of them, she says, 'What's that? It's a new one!'"

"I'm not going to let you say I will leave you," said Jack.

"I'm Not A Communist" Ties

... ..

"Which do you prefer?"

"Neither of them."

"Wilk is a great boy," said Zych.

"Let him go in another direction!"

"And Cztan?"

Jagienka began to laugh:

"Cztan," said she, turning toward Zbyszko, "he has hair on his face like a goat; one can hardly see his eyes; and he has as much grease on him as a bear."

Zbyszko now touched his head with his hand as if he had just remembered something important, and said:

"I must ask you for one thing more; have you any bear's grease? I want to use it for medicine for my uncle; and I could not find any in Bogdaniec."

"We used to have some," answered Jagienka; "but the boys have used some to grease their bows, and the dogs have eaten the rest."

"Is there none left?"

"Not a bit!"

"Well, then, I must find some in the forest."

"Have a hunting party for bears; there are plenty of them; and if you want some hunting implements, we will lend you some."

"I cannot wait. I will go some night to a *barcie*."

"Take a few men with you."

"No, I shall not do that, for they will frighten the beast."

"But you will take a crossbow!"

"What can I do with a crossbow during the night? There is no moon now! I will take a fork and a strong axe, and I will go alone to-morrow."

Jagienka was silent for awhile ; but great uneasiness was reflected on her face.

" Last year," said she, " the huntsman, Bezduch, was killed by a bear. It is dangerous, because as soon as the bear sees a man near the *barcie*, he immediately stands up on his hind feet."

" If he ran away, I could not get him," answered Zbyszko.

At that moment Zych who had been dozing, suddenly awakened and began to sing :

" Thou Kuba, of toil
I Maciek of pleasure,
Go then in the morning with the yoke in the field,
While I amuse myself with Kasia."

Then he said to Zbyszko :

" You know ? There are two of them, Wilk of Brzozowa and Cztań of Rogow ; and you ?"

But Jagienka being afraid that Zych would say too much, swiftly approached Zbyszko, and began to inquire :

" When are you going ? To-morrow ?"

" To-morrow after sunset."

" And to which *barcie* ?"

" To ours in Bogdaniec, not far from your boundaries, near the marshes of Radzikow. They tell me it is very easy to get a bear there."

CHAPTER V.

ZBYSZKO went for the bear as he proposed, because Macko became worse. At first when he reached Bogdaniec, he was sustained by joy and the first cares about the house; but on the third day, the fever returned, and the pain was so great that he was obliged to go to bed. Zbyszko went to the *barcie* during the day, and while there he perceived that there were the footprints of a bear in the mud. He spoke to the beehive keeper, Wawrek, who slept in a shed not far away, with his two fearful Podhalan¹ dogs; but he intended to return to the village on account of the cold.

They destroyed the shed, and Wawrek took the dogs with him. But first they smeared the trees here and there with honey, so that the smell of it would attract the animal. Zbyszko returned home and began to prepare for the expedition. He dressed himself in a warm reindeer jacket without sleeves; on the top of his head, he put a bonnet made of iron wire; finally he took a strong fork and a steel axe. Before sunset he had taken his position; and having made the sign of the cross, he sat down and waited.

The red beams of the setting sun were still shining between the branches of the gigantic pines. In the tops of the trees, the crows were flying, croaking and beating the air with their wings; here and there the hares were leaping toward the water, making a noise on the dried leaves; some-

¹ Podhale is part of the mountains of Karpaty.

times a swift marten passed by. In the thickets, the chirping of the birds was at first heard—but gradually ceased.

After sunset the noises of the forest began. Immediately a pack of boars passed near Zbyszko with a great bustle and snorting; then elks galloped in a long row, each holding his head on the tail of the one in front of him. The dried branches crackled under their feet and the forest resounded; but on they rushed toward the marshes where during the night, they were cool and safe. Finally the twilight was reflected on the sky, and the tops of the pine trees illuminated by it seemed to burn, as if on fire; then little by little everything began to be quieted. The forest was still. Dusk was rising from earth toward the gleaming twilight, which began finally to grow fainter, then gloomy, blacker and then was quenched.

"Now, everything will be quiet, until the wolves begin to howl," thought Zbyszko.

He regretted that he had not taken his crossbow, because he could easily have killed a boar or an elk. In the meanwhile, from the marshes came muffled sounds similar to heavy panting and whistling. Zbyszko looked toward that marsh with some apprehension, because the peasant, Radzik, who used to live here in an earth-hut, disappeared with his whole family, as if devoured by the earth. Some people said they were seized by robbers; but there were others who saw some strange footprints, neither human nor of beasts, round the cabin. The people shook their heads very much about that, and they even spoke about bringing a priest from Krzesnia, to bless the hut. But they did not do it because nobody was willing to live in that

hut, which from that time, had an evil reputation. It is true that the beehive keeper, Wawrek, did not pay any attention to these reports.

Zbyszko being armed with the fork and axe, was not afraid of the wild beasts; but he thought with some uneasiness about the evil forces, and he was glad when that noise stopped.

The last reverberation ceased, and there was complete silence. The wind stopped blowing and there was not even the usual whispering in the tops of the pine trees. From time to time, a pine cone fell, making quite a noise amidst the deep silence; but in general, everything was so quiet that Zbyszko heard his own respirations.

Thus he sat quietly for a long time, thinking first about the bear, and then about Danusia. He recollected how he seized her in his arms when bidding the princess farewell, and how she cried; he remembered her fair head and bright face, her wreaths of bachelor buttons, her singing, her red shoes with long tips, and finally everything that happened from the moment he first saw her. Such a longing to see her, filled his heart, that he forgot that he was in the forest waiting for the bear; instead of that he began to talk to himself:

"I will go to see you, because I cannot live without you."

He felt that he must go to Mazowsze; that if he remained in Bogdaniec, he would become good for nothing. He recollected Jurand and his strange opposition; then he thought that it was even more necessary he should go, and learn what that obstacle was, and if a challenge to combat could not remove it. Finally it seemed to him that Danusia stretched her hands toward him and cried:

"Come, Zbyszku! Come!" How could he refuse?

He was not sleeping, but he saw her as distinctly as in a dream. There she was, riding beside the princess, thrumming on her little lute, humming and thinking of him. Thinking that she would soon see him, and perhaps looking back.

Here Zbyszko aroused himself and listened, because he heard a rustling behind him. Then he grasped the fork in his hand more tightly, stretched his neck and listened again.

The rustling approached and then it became very distinct. Under some careful foot, the dried branches were crackling, the fallen leaves were rustling. Something was coming.

From time to time the rustling ceased, as if the beast halted beneath the trees; then there was such quietude that Zbyszko's ears began to ring; then again slow, careful steps were heard. That approach was so cautious that Zbyszko was surprised.

"I am sure 'the old'¹ must be afraid of the dogs which were here in the shed," said he to himself; "but it may be a wolf that has scented me."

Now the footsteps were no longer heard. Zbyszko, however, was sure that something had stopped twenty or thirty feet behind him.

He turned around once or twice; but although he could see the trunks of the trees quite well, he could not perceive anything else. He was obliged to wait.

He waited so long, that he was surprised a second time.

"A bear would not come here to stop under the *barcie*; and a wolf would not wait until morning."

¹ Nickname given to bears.

Suddenly a shiver ran through his body as he thought:

"Suppose it is something dreadful that comes from the marshes and is trying to surprise me from the rear! Suppose the slippery arms of a drowned man seize me, or the green eyes of a ghost look into my face; suppose a blue head on spider's legs comes out from behind the tree and begins to laugh!"

He felt his hair begin to rise under his iron bonnet.

But after a while, a rustling sounded in front of him, more distinct this time than formerly. Zbyszko breathed more freely; he thought that the same "wonder" had gone around him, and now approached from the front; but he preferred that. He seized his fork firmly, arose quietly and waited.

Now he noticed over his head the rustling of the pine trees, and he felt the wind blow in his face, coming from the marsh, and he smelt the bear.

There was not the slightest doubt that a *mys*¹ was coming!

Zbyszko was afraid no longer, and having bent his head, he strained to the utmost his hearing and his sight. Heavy, distinct steps were coming; the smell grew stronger; soon the snore and groaning were heard.

"I hope there are not two of them!" thought Zbyszko.

But at that moment, he perceived in front of him the large, dark form of the animal, which was walking in the same direction from which the wind was blowing, and could not get the scent of him; its attention was also attracted by the smell of the honey on the trees.

¹ Popular name for bear.

"Come, uncle!" exclaimed Zbyszko, coming out from beneath the pine tree.

The bear roared shortly as if frightened by an unexpected apparition; but he was too near to seek safety in flight; therefore, in a moment he reared and separated his forelegs as if for a hug. This was exactly what Zbyszko was waiting for; he gathered himself together, jumped like lightning and with all the strength of his powerful arms and of his weight, he drove the fork into the animal's chest.

The whole forest resounded now with the fearful roaring. The bear seized the fork with his paws, and tried to pull it out, but the incisions made by the points were too deep; therefore, feeling the pain, he roared still more fearfully. Wishing to reach Zbyszko, he leaned on the fork and thus drove it into his body still further. Zbyszko, not knowing that the points had entered so deeply, held on to the handle. The man and the animal began to struggle. The forest again resounded with the roaring in which wrath and despair were mingled.

Zbyszko could not use his axe until after he could drive the sharpened end of the fork into the ground. The bear having seized the handle, was shaking it as well as Zbyszko, and notwithstanding the pain caused by every movement of the points imbedded in his breast, he would not let it be "underpropped." In this way the terrible struggle continued, and Zbyszko finally felt that his strength would soon be exhausted. If he fell, then he would be lost; therefore, he gathered all his strength, strained his arms to the utmost, set his feet firmly and bent his back like a bow, so as not to be thrown

backward; and in his enthusiasm he repeated through set teeth:

"You or I will die!"

Such anger filled him that he really preferred at that moment to die, rather than to let the beast go. Finally his foot caught in the root of a tree; he tottered and would have fallen, if at that moment a dark figure had not appeared before him, and another fork "underpropped" the beast; and in the meanwhile, a voice shouted near his ear:

"Use your axe!"

Zbyszko, being excited by the fight, did not wonder even for a moment from whence came the unexpected help; but he seized the axe and cut with all his might. The fork cracked, broken by the weight and by the last convulsion of the beast, as it fell. There was a long silence broken only by Zbyszko's loud respirations. But after a while, he lifted his head, looked at the form standing beside him and was afraid, thinking that it might not be a man.

"Who are you?" asked he, with uneasiness.

"Jagienka!" answered a thin, womanly voice.

Zbyszko became dumb from astonishment; he could not believe his own eyes. But his doubts did not last long, because Jagienka's voice again resounded:

"I will build a fire."

Immediately the clatter of a fire steel against a flint sounded and the sparks began to fall; by their glittering light, Zbyszko beheld the white forehead, the dark eyebrows and the red lips of the girl who was blowing on the tinder which began to burn. Not until then did he realize that she had come to the forest to help him, and that without her aid, he

would have perished. He felt such gratitude toward her, that he impulsively seized her around the waist and kissed her on both cheeks.

The tinder and the steel fell to the ground.

"Let me be!" she began to repeat in a muffled voice; but she allowed him to kiss her and even, as if by accident, touched Zbyszko's lips with her mouth. He released her and said:

"May God reward you. I do not know what would have happened without your help."

Then Jagienka, while searching for the tinder and fire steel, began to excuse herself:

"I was worried about you, because Bezduch also went with a fork and an axe, but the bear tore him to pieces. If you met with such a misfortune, Macko would be very desolate, and he hardly breathes now. So I took a fork and came."

"Then it was you whom I heard there behind the pines?"

"Yes."

"And I thought it was an evil spirit."

"I was very much frightened, because it is dangerous to be without fire here around the Radzikowski marshes."

"Then why did you not speak to me?"

"Because I was afraid you would send me away."

Having said this, she again began to strike sparks from the steel, and put on the tinder a bundle of hemp which began to burn.

"I have two resinous pieces of wood," said she; "you bring some dried branches quickly, and we will soon have a fire."

In fact, after a while a bright fire was burning, and lighted the enormous, brown body of the bear which was lying in a pool of blood.

"Hej, a dreadful beast!" said Zbyszko, boastfully.

"You split his head entirely open! O, Jesus!"

Then she leaned over and felt of the bear's body, to ascertain whether the beast was fat; then she arose with a bright face, and said:

"There will be plenty of grease for two years."

"But the fork is broken, look!"

"That is too bad; what shall I tell them at home?"

"About what?"

"*Tatus* would not let me come into the forest, therefore I was obliged to wait until everybody had retired."

After a moment she added:

"You must not tell that I was here, because they will laugh at me."

"But I will go with you to your house, because I am afraid the wolves will attack you, and you have no fork."

"Very well!"

Thus they sat talking for a while beside the bright fire, looking like two young forest creatures.

Zbyszko looked at the girl's pretty face, lighted by the flames, and said with involuntary admiration:

"There is not another girl in this world as brave as you are. You ought to go to the war!"

She looked into his face and then she answered, almost sadly:

"I know; but you must not laugh at me."

CHAPTER VI.

JAGIENKA herself melted a large pot of bear's grease. Macko drank the first quart willingly, because it was fresh, and smelt good. Jagienka put the rest of it in a pot. Macko's hope increased; he was sure he would be cured.

"That is what I needed," said he. "When all parts inside of me become greasy, then that dog's splinter will slip out."

But the next quarts did not taste as well as the first; but he continued to drink it and Jagienka encouraged him, saying:

"You will get well. Zbilud of Ostrog had the links of a coat of mail driven into his neck; but they slipped out because he drank grease. But when your wound opens, you must put some grease of a beaver on it."

"Have you some?"

"Yes, we have. But if it be necessary to have it fresh, we will go with Zbyszko and get a beaver. Meanwhile it would not do any harm, if you promised something to some saint, who is the patron for wounds."

"I was thinking about that, but I do not know to whom I should make the promise. Saint George is the patron of knights; he protects the warrior from any accident and always gives him victory, and it is said that sometimes he fights personally for the one who is right. But a saint who fights willingly, does not heal willingly; and for that, there must be another saint with whom he would

not want to interfere. It is known that every saint has his specialty. But they will not interfere with one another; because that would cause quarrels, and it is not proper to fight in heaven. There are Kosma and Damian to whom all doctors pray, that illness may exist; otherwise the doctors would not have anything to eat. There is Saint Apolonia for the teeth and Saint Liborius for stone; but they will not do for me. The abbot, when he comes, will tell me whom I must ask. Every *clericus* does not know all celestial secrets and everyone of them is not familiar with such things, but the abbot is."

"Suppose you make a vow to the Lord Jesus himself?"

"Of course he is over all of them. But suppose your father had injured my servant, and I went to Krakow to complain to the king; what would the king tell me? He would say thus: 'I am monarch over all the country, and you complain to me about one of your peasants! Do you not have my officials in your part of the country; why did you not go to the castellan?' So the Lord Jesus is the ruler over the whole universe; but for smaller affairs, he employs the saints."

"Then I will tell you what to do," said Zbyszko, who entered just now; "make a vow to our late queen, that if she intercede for you, you will make a pilgrimage to Krakow. Why should you search after strange saints, when we have our own lady, who is better than they?"

"Bah! if I only knew that she would intercede for wounds!"

"No matter! There is no saint who would dare to show her an angry face; or if he dared, Lord God

would punish him for it, because she was not an ordinary woman, but a Polish queen."

"Who converted the last heathen country to the Christian faith! That is right," said Macko. "She must have a high place in God's council and surely none would dare to oppose her. Therefore I will do as you say."

This advice pleased Jagienka, who admired Zbyszko's common sense very much. That same evening, Macko made a vow and drank with still greater hope, the bear's grease. But after a week, he began to lose hope. He said that the grease was fermenting in his stomach, and that a lump was growing on his side near the last rib. At the end of ten days Macko was worse, and the lump grew larger and became inflamed. The sick man again had fever and began to make preparations for death.

But one night he awakened Zbyszko, and said:

"Light a piece of resinous wood; there is something the matter with me, but I do not know what."

Zbyszko jumped up and lighted a piece of pine wood.

"What is it?"

"What is it! Something has pierced the lump on my side. It must be the head of the spear! I had hold of it, but I cannot pull it out."

"It must be the spearhead! Nothing else. Grasp it well and pull."

Macko began to turn and to twist with pain; but he pushed his fingers deeper and deeper, until he seized a hard substance which finally he pulled out.

"O, Jesus!"

"Have you pulled it out?" asked Zbyszko.

"Yes. I am in a cold perspiration all over; but I have it; look!"

Having said this, he showed to Zbyszko a long splinter, which had separated from the spear and remained in his body for several months.

"Glory be to God and to Queen Jadwiga! Now you will get well."

"Perhaps; I am better, but it pains me greatly," said Macko, pressing the wound from which blood and pus began to flow. "Jagienka said that now I ought to dress the wound with the grease of a beaver."

"We will go to-morrow and get a beaver."

Macko felt considerably better the next day. He slept till morning, and when he awoke, immediately asked for something to eat. He would not even look at the bear's grease; but they cooked twenty eggs for him. He ate them voraciously, also a big loaf of bread, and drank about four quarts of beer; then he demanded that they call Zych, because he felt jovial.

Zbyszko sent one of the Turks, given to him by Zawisza, after Zych who mounted a horse and came in the afternoon when the young people were ready to go to the Odstajny lake to catch a beaver. At first there was plenty of laughter and singing, while they drank mead; but afterward the old *wlodykas* began to talk about the children, each praising his own.

"What a man Zbyszko is!" said Macko; "there is no other like him in the world. He is brave and as agile as a wild-cat. Do you know that when they conducted him to the scaffold in Krakow, all the girls standing at the windows were crying,

and such girls;—daughters of knights and of castellans, and also the beautiful townswomen.”

“They may be beautiful and the daughters of castellans, but they are not better than my Jagienka!” answered Zych of Zgorzelice.

“Did I say they were better? It will be difficult to find a better girl than Jagienka.”

“I do not say anything against Zbyszko either; he can stretch a crossbow without a crank.”

“He can underprop a bear also. Did you see how he cut the bear? He cut the head and one paw off.”

“He cut the head off, but he did not underprop it alone. Jagienka helped him.”

“Did she? He did not tell me about that.”

“Because he promised her not to tell anyone. The girl was ashamed because she went into the forest alone at night. She told me all about it; she never hides the truth. Frankly speaking, I was not pleased because who knows what might have happened. I wanted to scold her, but she said, ‘If I be not able to preserve my wreath myself, how can you preserve it, you *tatulu*; but do not fear, Zbyszko knows what knightly honor is.’”

“That is true. They have gone alone to-day also.”

“They will be back in the evening. But during the night, the devil is worse and the girl does not feel ashamed because of the darkness.”

Macko thought for a while; then he said as if to himself:

“But they are fond of each other.”

“Bah! it is a pity he made a vow to another!”

“That is, as you know, a knightly custom. They consider the one who has no lady, a churl.

He also made a vow to capture some peacocks' tufts, and those he must get because he swore by his knightly honor; he must also challenge Lichtenstein; but from the other vows, the abbot can release him."

"The abbot is coming soon."

"Do you expect him?" asked Macko; then he said again: "And what does such a vow amount to; Jurand told him positively that he could not give the girl to him! I do not know whether he had promised her to some one else, or whether he had destined her for God."

"Have I told you that the abbot loves Jagienka as much as if she were his own? The last time I saw him he said: 'I have no relations except those from my mother's side; and they will receive nothing from me.'"

Here Macko looked at Zych suspiciously and after awhile he answered:

"Would you wrong us?"

"Jagienka will get Moczydoly," said Zych evasively.

"Immediately?"

"Immediately. I would not give it to another; but I will do it for her."

"Half of Bogdaniec belongs to Zbyszko, and if God restore my health, I will improve the estate. Do you love Zbyszko?"

Zych began to wink and said:

"When anybody mentions Zbyszko's name in the presence of Jagienka, she immediately turns away."

"And when you mention another?"

"When I mention another, she only laughs and says: 'What then?'"

"Well, do you not see. God will help us and Zbyszko will forget about the other girl. I am old and I will forget also. Will you have some more mead?"

"Yes. I will."

"Well, the abbot is a wise man! You know that some of the abbots are laymen; but this abbot, although he does not sit among the friars, is a priest just the same; and a priest can always give better advice than an ordinary man, because he knows how to read, and he communes with the Holy Ghost. I am glad that Jagienka is going to have the estate of Moczydoly. As for me, as soon as the Lord Jesus restores my health, I will try to induce some of the peasants living on the estate of Wilk of Brzozowa, to settle on my land. I will offer them more land, I have plenty of it in Bogdaniec. They can come if they wish to, for they are free. In time, I will build a *grodek* in Bogdaniec, a worthy castle of oaks with a ditch around it. Let Zbyszko and Jagienka hunt together. I think we shall soon have snow. They will become accustomed to each other, and the boy will forget that other girl. Let them be together. Speak frankly; would you give Jagienka to him or not?"

"I would. Did we not decide a long time ago that they should marry, and that Moczydoly and Bogdaniec would be our grandchildren's?"

"*Grady!*" exclaimed Macko, joyfully. "God will bless us and their children will be as numerous as hail. The abbot shall baptize them."

"If he will only be quick enough!" exclaimed Zych. "I have not seen you so jolly as you are to-day for a long time."

"Because I am glad in my heart. Do not fear

about Zbyszko. Yesterday when Jagienka mounted her horse, the wind blew. I asked Zbyszko then: 'Did you see?' and his eyes shone. I have also noticed that although at first they did not speak much to each other, now when they go together, they are continually turning their heads toward each other, and they talk—talk! Have some more mead?"

"Yes, I will."

"To Zbyszko and Jagienka's health!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE old *włodyka* was not mistaken when he said that Zbyszko and Jagienka were fond of each other, and even that they longed for each other. Jagienka pretending that she wanted to visit the sick Macko, went very often to Bogdaniec, either alone or with her father. Zbyszko also went often to Zgorzelice. In that way, after a few days a familiarity and friendship originated between them. They grew fond of each other and talked about everything that interested them. There was much mutual admiration in that friendship also. The young and handsome Zbyszko, who had already distinguished himself in the war, had participated in tournaments and had been in the presence of kings, was considered by the girl, when she compared him with Cztan of Rogow or Wilk of Brzozowa, a true courtly knight and almost a prince; as for him, he was astonished at the great beauty of the girl. He was loyal to Danusia; but very often when he looked suddenly at Jagienka, either in the forest or at home, he said involuntarily to himself: "Hej! what a girl!" When, helping her to mount her horse, he felt her elastic flesh under his hands, disquietude filled him and he shivered, and a torpor began to steal over him.

Jagienka, although naturally proud, inclined to raillery, and even aggressive, grew more and more gentle with him, often looking in his eyes to discover how she could please him; he understood her

affection; he was grateful for it and he liked to be with her more and more. Finally, especially after Macko began to drink the bear's grease, they saw each other almost every day; when the splinter came out of the wound, they went together to get some fresh beaver's grease, necessary for the healing of the wound.

They took their crossbows, mounted their horses and went first to Moczydoly, destined for Jagienka's dowry, then to the edge of the forest, where they entrusted the horses to a servant and went on foot, because it was impossible to pass through the thicket on horseback. While walking, Jagienka pointed to the large meadow covered with reeds and to the blue ribbon of forest and said:

"Those woods belong to Cztan of Rogow."

"The same man who would like to take you?"

She began to laugh:

"He would if he could!"

"You can defend yourself very easily, having for your defence the Wilk¹ who, as I understand, gnashes his teeth at Cztan. I wonder that they have not challenged each other to fight until death."

"They have not because *tatulo* before he went to the war said to them: 'If you fight about Jagienka I do not want to see you any more.' How could they fight then? When they are in Zgorzelice they scowl at each other; but afterward they drink together in an inn in Krzesnia until they are drunk."

"Stupid boys!"

"Why?"

"Because while Zych was away one of them

¹ Wolf.

should have taken you by force. What could Zych do, if when he returned he had found you with a baby on your lap?"

At this Jagienka's blue eyes flashed immediately.

"Do you think I would let them take me? Have we not people in Zgorzelice, and do I not know how to manage a crossbow or a boar-spear? Let them try! I would chase them back home and even attack them in Rogow or Brzozowa. Father knew very well that he could go to the war and leave me home alone."

Speaking thus, she frowned, and shook the crossbow threateningly, so that Zbyszko began to laugh, and said:

"You ought to have been a knight and not a girl."

She becoming calmer, answered:

"Cztan guarded me from Wilk and Wilk from Cztan. Then I was also under the abbot's tutelage, and it is well for everyone to let the abbot alone."

"Owa!" answered Zbyszko. "They are all afraid of the abbot! But I, may Saint George help me to speak the truth to you, I would neither be afraid of the abbot, nor of your peasants, nor of yourself; I would take you!"

At this Jagienka stopped on the spot, and fixing her eyes on Zbyszko, asked in a strange, soft, low voice:

"You would take me?"

Then her lips parted and blushing like the dawn, she waited for his answer.

But he evidently was only thinking what he would do, were he in Cztan or Wilk's position; because after a while, he shook his golden hair and said further:

"A girl must marry and not fight with the boys. Unless you have a third one, you must choose one of these two."

"You must not tell me that," answered the girl, sadly.

"Why not? I have been away from home for a long time, therefore I do not know whether there is somebody around Zgorzelice, of whom you are fond or not."

"Hej!" answered Jagienka. "Let it be!"

They walked along silently, trying to make their way through the thicket which was now much denser because the bushes and the trees were covered with wild hop vines. Zbyszko walked first, tearing down the green vines, and breaking the branches here and there; Jagienka followed him with a crossbow on her shoulder, looking like a hunting goddess.

"Beyond that thicket," said she, "there is a deep brook; but I know where the ford is."

"I have long boots on, reaching above my knees; we can cross it," answered Zbyszko.

Shortly afterward, they reached the brook. Jagienka being familiar with the Moczydlowski forests, very easily found the ford; but the water was deeper than usual, the little brook being swollen by the rains. Then Zbyszko without asking her permission, seized the girl in his arms.

"I can cross by myself," said Jagienka.

"Put your arms around my neck!" answered Zbyszko.

He walked slowly through the water, while the girl nestled to him. Finally when they were near the other shore, she said:

"Zbyszku!"

"What?"

"I care neither for Cztań, nor for Wilk."

As he placed her on the shore, he answered excitedly:

"May God give you the best! He will not be wronged."

The Odstajny lake was not far away now. Jagienka walking in front, turned from time to time, and putting a finger on her lips, ordered Zbyszko to be silent. They were walking amidst the osiers and gray willows, on low, damp ground. From the left side, were heard the voices of birds, and Zbyszko was surprised at that, because it was time for the birds to migrate.

"We are near a morass which is never frozen," whispered Jagienka; "the ducks pass the winter there; even in the lake the water freezes only near the shores. See how it is steaming."

Zbyszko looked through the willows and noticed in front of him, something like a bank of fog; it was the Odstajny lake.

Jagienka again put a finger to her lips, and after a while they reached the lake. The girl climbed on an old willow and bent over the water. Zbyszko followed her example; and for a long time they remained quiet, seeing nothing in front of them, on account of the fog; hearing nothing but the mournful puling of lapwings. Finally the wind blew, rustled the osiers and the yellow leaves of the willows, and disclosed the waters of the lake which were slightly ruffled by the wind.

"Do you see anything?" whispered Zbyszko.

"No. Keep quiet!"

After a while, the wind ceased and complete si-

lence followed. Then on the surface of the lake appeared one head, then another; finally near them a big beaver entered the water from the shore, carrying in his mouth a newly cut branch, and began to swim amidst the duck-weed and marigold, holding his mouth out of the water and pushing the branch before him. Zbyszko lying on the trunk beneath Jagienka, noticed that her elbow moved quietly and that her head was bent forward; evidently she had aimed at the animal which, not suspecting any danger, was swimming close by, toward the clear water.

Finally the string of the crossbow twanged and at the same moment Jagienka cried:

"I hit him! I hit him!"

Zbyszko instantly climbed higher and looked through the thicket toward the water; the beaver plunged into the water, then reappeared on the surface, turning somersets.

"I hit him hard! He will soon be quiet!" said Jagienka.

The movements of the animal grew slower, and then before one had time sufficient to recite one "*Ave Maria*," he was floating on his back on the surface of the water.

"I will go and get him," said Zbyszko.

"No, do not go. Here, near the shore, there is deep slime. Anyone who does not know how to manage, will surely drown."

"Then how will we get him?"

"He will be in Bogdaniec this evening, do not worry about that; now we must go home."

"You hit him hard!"

"Bah! It is not the first one!"

"Other girls are afraid to even look at a cross-

bow; but with you, one can go to the forest all his life."

Jagienka smiled at such praise, but she did not answer; they returned the same way they came. Zbyszko asked her about the beavers and she told him how many of them there were in Moczydoly, and how many in Zgorzelice.

Suddenly she struck her hip with her hand and exclaimed:

"Well, I left my arrows on the willow. Wait!"

Before he could say that he would return for them, she jumped back like a roe and disappeared. Zbyszko waited and waited; at last he began to wonder what detained her so long.

"She must have lost the arrows and is searching for them," he said to himself; "but I will go and see whether anything has happened to her."

He had hardly started to return before the girl appeared with her bow in her hand, her face smiling and blushing, and with the beaver on her shoulders.

"For God's sake!" cried Zbyszko, "how did you get him?"

"How? I went into the water, that is all! It is nothing new for me; but I did not want you to go, because the mud drags anyone down who does not know how to swim in it."

"And I waited here like a fool! You are a sly girl."

"Well, could I undress before you?"

"Bah! If I had followed you, then I would have seen a wonder!"

"Be silent!"

"I was just starting, so help me God!"

"Be silent!"

After a while, wishing to turn the conversation, she said :

“Wring my tress ; it makes my back wet.”

Zbyszko caught the tress in one hand and began to wring with the other, saying :

“The best way will be to unbraid it, then the wind will soon dry it.”

But she did not wish to do that on account of the thicket through which they were obliged to make their way. Zbyszko now put the beaver on his shoulders. Jagienka walking in front of him, said :

“Now Macko will soon be well, because there is no better medicine for a wound than the grease of a bear inside, and the grease of a beaver outside. In about two weeks, he will be able to ride a horse.”

“May God grant that !” answered Zbyszko. “I am waiting for it as for salvation, because I cannot leave the sick man, and it is hard for me to stay here.”

“Why is it hard for you to stay here ?” she asked him.

“Has Zych told you nothing about Danusia ?”

“He did tell me something. I know that she covered you with her veil. I know that ! He told me also that every knight makes some vow, to serve his lady. But he said that such a vow did not amount to anything ; that some of the knights were married, but they served their ladies just the same. But Danusia, Zbyszko ; tell me about her !”

Having come very close to him, she began to look at his face with great anxiety ; he did not pay any attention to her frightened voice and looks, but said :

"She is my lady, and at the same time she is my sweetest love. I have not spoken about her to anybody; but I am going to tell you, because we have been acquainted since we were children. I will follow her beyond the tenth river and beyond the tenth sea, to the Germans and to the Tartars, because there is no other girl like her. Let my uncle remain in Bogdaniec, and I will go to her. What do I care about Bogdaniec, the household, the herds, or the abbot's wealth, without her! I will mount my horse and I will go, so help me God; I will fulfill that which I promised her, or I will die."

"I did not know," answered Jagienka, in a hollow voice.

Zbyszko began to tell her about all that had happened; how he had met Danusia in Tyniec; how he had made a vow to her; about everything that happened afterward; about his imprisonment, and how Danusia rescued him; about Jurand's refusal, their farewell and his loneliness; finally about his joy, because as soon as Macko became well, he would go to his beloved girl. His story was interrupted at last by the sight of the servant with the horses, waiting on the edge of the forest.

Jagienka immediately mounted her horse and began to bid Zbyszko good-bye.

"Let the servant follow you with the beaver; I am going to Zgorzelice."

"Then you will not go to Bogdaniec? Zych is there."

"No. *Tatulo* said he would return and told me to go home."

"Well, may God reward you for the beaver."

"With God."

Then Jagienka was alone. Going home through the heaths, she looked back for a while after Zbyszko; when he disappeared beyond the trees, she covered her eyes with her hands as if sheltering them from the sunlight. But soon large tears began to flow down her cheeks and drop one after another on the horse's mane.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER the conversation with Zbyszko, Jagienka did not appear in Bogdaniec for three days; but on the third day she hurried in with the news that the abbot had arrived at Zgorzelice. Macko received the news with emotion. It is true he had money enough to pay the amount for which the estate was pledged, and he calculated that he would have enough to induce settlers to come, to buy herds and to make other improvements; but in the whole transaction, much depended on the disposition of the rich relation, who, for instance, could take or leave the peasants settled by him on the land, and in that way increase or diminish the value of the estate.

Therefore Macko asked Jagienka about the abbot; how he was; if he was in a good humor or gloomy; what he had said about them; when he was coming to Bogdaniec? She gave him sensible answers, trying to encourage and tranquillize him in every respect.

She said that the abbot was in good health and gay; that he was accompanied by a considerable retinue in which, besides the armed servants, there were several seminarists and *rybals*; that he sang with Zych and that he listened gladly not only to the spiritual but to the worldly songs also. She had noticed also that he asked carefully about Macko, and that he listened eagerly to Zych's narration of Zbyszko's adventure in Krakow.

"You know best what you ought to do," finally the clever girl said; "but I think that Zbyszko

ought to go immediately and greet his elder relative, and not wait until the abbot comes to Bogdaniec."

Macko liked the advice; therefore he called Zbyszko and said to him:

"Dress yourself beautifully; then go and bow to the abbot, and pay him respect; perhaps he will take a fancy to you."

Then he turned to Jagienka:

"I would not be surprised if you were stupid, because you are a woman; but I am astonished to find that you have such good sense. Tell me then, the best way to receive the abbot when he comes here."

"As for food, he will tell you himself what he wishes to have; he likes to feast well, but if there be a great deal of saffron in the food, he will eat anything."

Macko hearing this, said:

"How can I get saffron for him!"

"I brought some," said Jagienka.

"Give us more such girls!" exclaimed the overjoyed Macko. "She is pretty, a good housekeeper, intelligent and good-hearted! Hej! if I were only younger I would take her immediately!"

Here Jagienka glanced at Zbyszko, and having sighed slightly, she said further:

"I brought also the dice, the goblet and the cloth, because after his meal, the abbot likes to play dice."

"He had the same habit formerly, and he used to get very angry."

"He gets angry sometimes now; then he throws the goblet on the ground and rushes from the room into the fields. Then he comes back smiling, and

laughs at his anger. You know him! If one does not contradict him, you cannot find a better man in the world."

"And who would contradict him; is he not wise and mightier than others?"

Thus they talked while Zbyszko was dressing in the alcove. Finally he came out, looking so beautiful that he dazzled Jagienka, as much as he did the first time he went to Zgorzelice in his white *jaka*. She regretted that this handsome knight was not hers, and that he was in love with another girl.

Macko was pleased because he thought that the abbot could not help liking Zbyszko and would be more lenient during their business transaction. He was so much pleased with this idea, that he determined to go also.

"Order the servants to prepare a wagon," said he to Zbyszko. "If I could travel from Krakow to Bogdaniec with an iron in my side, surely I can go now to Zgorzelice."

"If you only will not faint," said Jagienka.

"Ej! I will be all right, because I feel stronger already. And even if I faint, the abbot will see that I hastened to meet him, and will be more generous."

"I prefer your health to his generosity!" said Zbyszko.

But Macko was persistent and started for Zgorzelice. On the road he moaned a little, but he continued to give Zbyszko advice; he told him how to act in Zgorzelice, and especially recommended him to be obedient and humble in the presence of their mighty relative, who never would suffer the slightest opposition.

When they came to Zgorzelice, they found Zych and the abbot sitting in front of the house, looking at the beautiful country, and drinking wine. Behind them, near the wall, sat six men of the abbot's retinue; two of them were *rybalts*; one was a pilgrim, who could easily be distinguished by his curved stick and dark mantle; the others looked like seminarists because their heads were shaved, but they wore lay clothing, girdles of ox leather, and swords.

When Zych perceived Macko coming in the wagon, he rushed toward him; but the abbot, evidently remembering his spiritual dignity, remained seated, and began to say something to his seminarists. Zbyszko and Zych conducted the sick Macko toward the house.

"I am not well yet," said Macko, kissing the abbot's hand, "but I came to bow to you, my benefactor; to thank you for your care of Bogdaniec, and to beg you for a benediction, which is most necessary for a sinful man."

"I heard you were better," said the abbot, placing his hand on Macko's head; "and that you had promised to go to the grave of our late queen."

"Not knowing which saint's protection to ask for, I made a vow to her."

"You did well!" said the abbot, enthusiastically; "she is better than all the others, if one only dare beseech her!"

In a moment his face became flushed with anger, his cheeks filled with blood, his eyes began to sparkle.

They were so used to his impetuosity, that Zych began to laugh and exclaimed:

"Strike, who believes in God!"

As for the abbot, he puffed loudly, and looked at those present ; then laughed suddenly, and having looked at Zbyszko, he asked :

“ Is that your nephew and my relation ? ”

Zbyszko bent and kissed his hand.

“ I saw him when he was a small boy ; I did not recognize him,” said the abbot. “ Show yourself ! ” And he began to look at him from head to foot, and finally said :

“ He is too handsome ! It is a girl, not a knight ! ”

To this Macko replied :

“ That girl used to go to dancing parties with the Germans ; but those who took her, fell down and did not rise again.”

“ And he can stretch a crossbow without a crank ! ” exclaimed Jagienka.

The abbot turned toward her :

“ Ah ! Are you here ? ”

She blushed so much that her neck and ears became red, and answered :

“ I saw him do it.”

“ Look out then, that he does not shoot you, because you will be obliged to nurse yourself for a long time.”

At this the *rybals*, the pilgrim and the seminarists broke out with great laughter, which confused Jagienka still more ; the abbot took pity on her, and having raised his arm, he showed her his enormous sleeve, and said :

“ Hide here, my dear girl ! ”

Meanwhile Zych assisted Macko to the bench and ordered some wine for him. Jagienka went to get it. The abbot turned to Zbyszko and began to talk thus :

“ Enough of joking ! I compared you to a girl,

not to humiliate you, but to praise your beauty, of which many girls would be proud. But I know that you are a man! I have heard about your deeds at Wilno, about the Fryzes, and about Krakow. Zych has told me all about it, understand!"

Here he began to look intently into Zbyszko's eyes, and after a while he said:

"If you have promised three peacocks' tufts, then search for them! It is praiseworthy and pleasing to God to persecute the foes of our nation. But, if you have promised something else, I will release you from the vow."

"Hej!" said Zbyszko; "when a man promises something in his soul to the Lord Jesus, who has the power to release him?"

Macko looked with fear at the abbot; but evidently he was in an excellent humor, because instead of becoming angry, he threatened Zbyszko with his finger and said:

"How clever you are! But you must be careful that you do not meet the same fate that the German, Beyhard, did."

"What happened to him?" asked Zych.

"They burned him on a pile."

"What for?"

"Because he used to say that a layman could understand God's secrets as well as the clergy."

"They punished him severely!"

"But righteously!" shouted the abbot, "because he had blasphemed against the Holy Ghost. What do you think? Is a layman able to interpret any of God's secrets?"

"He cannot by any means!" exclaimed the wandering seminarists, together.

"Keep quiet, you *shpilmen*!" said the abbot;

"you are not ecclesiastics, although your heads are shaved."

"We are not '*shpilmen*,' but courtiers of Your Grace," answered one of them, looking toward a large bucket from which the smell of hops and malt was filling the air.

"Look! He is talking from a barrel!" exclaimed the abbot. "Hej, you shaggy one! Why do you look at the bucket? You will not find any Latin at the bottom of that."

"I am not looking for Latin, but for beer; but I cannot find any."

The abbot turned toward Zbyszko, who was looking with astonishment at such courtiers as these, and said:

"They are *clerici scholares*;¹ but every one of them prefers to throw his books aside, and taking his lute, wander through the world. I shelter and nourish them; what else can I do? They are good for nothing, but they know how to sing and they are familiar with God's service; therefore I have some benefit out of them in my church, and in case of need, they will defend me, because some of them are fierce fellows! This pilgrim says that he was in the Holy Land; but I have asked him in vain about some of the seas and countries; he does not know even the name of the Greek emperor nor in what city he lives."

"I did know," said the pilgrim, in a hoarse voice; "but the fever I caught at the Danube, shook everything out of me."

"What surprises me most is, that they wear swords, being wandering seminarists," said Zbyszko.

"They are allowed to wear them," said the

¹ Seminarists students.

abbot, "because they have not received orders yet; and there is no occasion for anyone to wonder because I wear a sword even though I am an abbot. A year ago I challenged Wilk of Brzozowa to fight for the forests which you passed; but he did not appear."

"How could he fight with one of the clergy?" interrupted Zych.

At this the abbot became angry, struck the table with his fist, and exclaimed:

"When I wear armor, then I am not a priest, but a nobleman! He did not come because he preferred to have his servants attack me in Tulcza. That is why I wear a sword: *Omnes leges, omni-que iura vim vi repellere cunctisque sese defensare permittunt!* That is why I gave them their swords."

Hearing the Latin, Zych, Macko and Zbyszko became silent and bent their heads before the abbot's wisdom, because they did not understand a word of it; as for the abbot, he looked very angry for a while, and then he said:

"Who knows but what he will attack me even here?"

"Owa! Let him come!" exclaimed the wandering seminarists, seizing the hilts of their swords.

"I would like to have him attack me! I am longing for a fight."

"He will not do that," said Zych. "It is more likely that he will come to bow to you. He gave up the forests, and now he is anxious about his son. You know! But he can wait a long time!"

Meanwhile the abbot became quieted and said:

"I saw young Wilk drinking with Cztan of Rogow in an inn in Krzesnia. They did not recog-

nize us at once, because it was dark; they were talking about Jagienka."

Here he turned to Zbyszko:

"And about you, too."

"What do they want from me?"

"They do not want anything from you; but they do not like it that there is a third young man near Zgorzelice. Czatan said to Wilk: 'After I tan his skin, he will not be so smooth.' And Wilk said: 'Perhaps he will be afraid of us; if not, I will break his bones!' Then they assured each other that you would be afraid of them."

Hearing this Macko looked at Zych, and Zych looked at him; their faces expressed great cunning and joy. Neither of them was sure whether the abbot had really heard such a conversation, or whether he was only saying this to excite Zbyszko; but they both knew, and Macko especially, that there was no better way to incite Zbyszko to try to win Jagienka.

The abbot added deliberately:

"It is true, they are fierce fellows!"

Zbyszko did not show any excitement; but he asked in a strange tone that did not sound like his voice:

"To-morrow is Sunday?"

"Yes, Sunday."

"You will go to church?"

"Yes!"

"Where? to Krzesnia?"

"That is the nearest!"

"Well, all right then!"

CHAPTER IX.

ZYBSZKO, having joined Zych and Jagienka, who were accompanying the abbot and his retinue to Krzesnia, rode with them, because he wanted to show the abbot that he was afraid neither of Wilk of Brzozowa, nor of Cztan of Rogow. He was again surprised at Jagienka's beauty. He had often seen her in Zgorzelice and Bogdaniec, dressed beautifully; but never had she looked as she did now when going to church. Her cloak was made of red broadcloth, lined with ermine; she wore red gloves, and on her head was a little hood embroidered with gold, from beneath which two braids fell down on her shoulders. She was not sitting on the horse astride, but on a high saddle which had an arm and a little bench for her feet, which scarcely showed from beneath her long skirt. Zych permitted the girl to dress in a sheepskin overcoat and high-legged boots when at home, but required that for church she should be dressed not like the daughter of a poor *wlodyczka*,¹ but like the *panna* of a mighty nobleman. Two boys, dressed like pages, conducted her horse. Four servants were riding behind with the abbot's seminarists, who were armed with swords and carried their lutes. Zbyszko admired all the retinue, but especially Jagienka, who looked like a picture. The abbot, who was dressed in a red cloak, having enormous sleeves, resembled a traveling prince. The most modest dress was worn by Zych, who requiring

¹ Diminutive of *wlodyka*.

magnificent display for the others, for himself cared only for singing and joy.

Zych, Zbyszko, Jagienka and the abbot rode together. At first the abbot ordered his *shpilmen* to sing some church songs; afterward, when he was tired of their songs, he began to talk with Zbyszko, who smiled at his enormous sword, which was as large as a two-handed German sword.

"I see," said he gravely, "that you wonder at my sword; the synod permits a clergyman to wear a sword during a journey, and I am traveling. When the holy father forbade the ecclesiastics to wear swords and red dresses, most assuredly he meant the men of low birth, because God intended that noblemen should wear arms; and he who would dare to take this right from a nobleman, would oppose His eternal will."

"I saw the Mazovian Prince Henryk, when he fought in the lists," said Zbyszko.

"We do not censure him, because he fought," answered the abbot, raising his finger, "but because he married and married unhappily; *fornicarium* and *bibulam* had taken *mulierem*, whom *Bachum* since she was young *adorabat*, and besides that she was *adullera*, from whom no one could expect any good." He stopped his horse and began to expound with still greater gravity:

"Whoever wishes to marry, or to choose *uxorem*, must ascertain if she is pious, moral, a good house-keeper and cleanly. This is recommended not only by the fathers of the church, but also by a certain pagan sage, called Seneca. And how can you know whether you have chosen well, if you do not know the nest from which you take your life companion? Because another sage has said; *Pomus*

nam cadit absque arbore. As is the ox, so is the skin; as is the mother, so is the girl. From which you, a sinner, must draw this moral,—that you must look for your wife not far away, but near; because if you get a bad one, you will cry as did the philosopher, when his quarrelsome wife poured *aquam sordidam* on his head."

"*In sæcula sæculorum, amen!*" exclaimed in unison the wandering seminarists, who when responding to the abbot, did not always answer properly.

They were all listening very attentively to the abbot's words, admiring his eloquence and his knowledge of the Scriptures; he apparently did not speak directly to Zbyszko; but on the contrary, he turned more toward Zych and Jagienka, as if he wished to edify them. But evidently Jagienka understood what he was trying to do, because from beneath her long eyelashes, she looked at Zbyszko, who frowned and dropped his head as if he were seriously thinking about what the abbot had said.

After this the retinue moved on silently; but when they came near Krzesnia, the abbot touched his girdle and then turned it so that he could seize the hilt of his sword more easily, and said:

"I am sure that old Wilk of Brzozowa will come with a good retinue."

"Perhaps," replied Zych, "but I heard that he was not well."

"One of my seminarists heard that he intends to attack us in front of the inn after the service is over."

"He will not do that without a challenge, and especially after holy mass."

"May God bring him to reason. I do not seek

a quarrel with anybody and I bear my wrongs patiently."

Here he looked at the *shpilmen*, and said:

"Do not draw your swords, and remember that you are spiritual servants; but if they attack us first, then strike them!"

Zbyszko, while riding beside Jagienka, said to her:

"I am sure that in Krzesnia we will meet young Wilk and Cztan. Show me them from afar, so that I may know them."

"Very well, Zbyszku," answered Jagienka.

"Do they not meet you before the service and after the service? What do they do then?"

"They serve me."

"They will not serve you now, understand?"

And she answered again, almost with humility:

"Very well, Zbyszku."

Further conversation was interrupted by the sound of the wooden knockers, there being no bells in Krzesnia. After a few moments they arrived at the church. From the crowd in front, waiting for mass, young Wilk and Cztan of Rogow came forward immediately; but Zbyszko jumped from his horse, and before they could reach her, seized Jagienka and lifted her down from her horse; then he took her by the hand, and looking at them threateningly, conducted her to the church.

In the vestibule of the church, they were again disappointed. Both rushed to the font of holy water, plunged their hands in, and then stretched them toward the girl. But Zbyszko did the same, and she touched his fingers; then having made the sign of the cross, she entered the church with him. Then not only young Wilk, but Cztan of Rogow

also, notwithstanding his stupidity, understood that this had been done purposely, and both were very angry. Wilk rushed out of the vestibule and ran like a madman, not knowing where he was going. Cztan rushed after him, although not knowing why.

They stopped at the corner of the inclosure where there were some large stones ready for the foundation of the tower which was to be built in Krzesnia. Then, Wilk wishing to assuage the wrath which raged in his breast, seized one of these stones, and began to shake it; Cztan seeing him do this, seized it also, and both began to roll it toward the church gate.

The people looked at them with amazement, thinking that they had made some vow, and that in this way they wished to contribute to the building of the tower. This effort gave them relief and they came to their senses; then they stood, pale from their exertion, puffing and looking at each other.

Cztan of Rogow was the first to break the silence.

"What now?" asked he.

"What?" answered Wilk.

"Shall we attack him immediately?"

"How can we do that in the church?"

"Not in the church, but after mass."

"He is with Zych and the abbot. And have you forgotten that Zych said that if there were a fight, he would refuse to let either of us visit at Zgorzelice. But for that, I would have broken your ribs long ago."

"Or I, yours!" answered Cztan, clinching his powerful fists.

And their eyes began to sparkle threateningly;

but soon they both realized that now, more than ever, they needed to have a good understanding. They often fought together; but after each fight, they always became reconciled, because although they were divided by their love for Jagienka, they could not live without each other. Now they had a common foe and they understood that the enemy was a dangerous one.

After a while Cztan asked :

"What shall we do? Shall we send him a challenge?"

Wilk, although he was wiser, did not know what to do. Fortunately the knockers resounded to notify the people that mass would begin. When he heard them he said :

"What shall we do? Go to church now and after that, we will do whatever pleases God."

Cztan of Rogow was pleased with this answer.

"Perhaps the Lord Jesus will send us an inspiration," said he.

"And will bless us," added Wilk.

"According to justice."

They went to church, and having listened devoutly to the mass, they grew more hopeful. They did not lose their temper after mass, when Jagienka again accepted holy water from Zbyszko. In the church-yard they bowed to Zych, to Jagienka and even to the abbot, although he was an enemy of Wilk of Brzozowa. They scowled at Zbyszko, but did not attempt to touch him, although their hearts were throbbing with grief, anger and jealousy; never before had Jagienka seemed to them to be as beautiful as she was then. When the brilliant retinue moved on and when from afar they heard the merry song of the ambulant semi-

narists, Cztan began to wipe the perspiration from his hairy cheeks and to snort like a horse; as for Wilk, he said, gnashing his teeth:

"To the inn! To the inn! Woe to me!" Afterward remembering what had relieved them before, they again seized the stone and rolled it back to its former place.

Zbyszko rode beside Jagienka, listening to the abbot's *shpilmen* singing merry songs; but when they had traveled five or six furlongs, he suddenly reined in his horse, and said:

"Oh! I intended to pay for a mass to be said for uncle's health and I forgot it; I must return."

"Do not go back!" exclaimed Jagienka; "we will send from Zgorzelice."

"No, I will return, and you must not wait for me. With God!"

"With God," said the abbot. "Go!" And his face brightened; when Zbyszko disappeared, he touched Zych with his elbow and said:

"Do you understand?"

"What?"

"He will surely fight in Krzesnia with Wilk and Cztan; but I wished for it and I am glad."

"They are dreadful boys! If they wound him, then what of it?"

"What of it? If he fight for Jagienka, then how can he afterward think about that other girl, Jurandowna? From this time, Jagienka will be his lady, not the other girl; and I wish it because he is my relative and I like him."

"Bah! What about his vow?"

"I will give him absolution in the twinkling of an eye! Have you not heard that I promised to absolve him?"

"Your head is wise about everything," answered Zych.

The abbot was pleased with this praise; then he approached nearer Jagienka and asked:

"Why are you so sad?"

She leaned on the saddle, seized the abbot's hand and lifted it to her mouth:

"Godfather, could you not send your *shpilmen* to Krzesnia?"

"What for? They will get drunk in the inn—that's all."

"But they may prevent a quarrel."

The abbot looked into her eyes and then said sharply:

"Let them even kill him."

"Then they must kill me also!" exclaimed Jagienka.

The bitterness which had accumulated in her bosom since that conversation about Danusia with Zbyszko, mingled with grief, now gushed forth in a stream of tears. Seeing this, the abbot encircled her with his arm, almost covering her with his enormous sleeve, and began to talk:

"Do not be afraid, my dear little girl. They may quarrel, but the other boys are noblemen; they will attack him only in a chivalrous manner; they will call him up on the field, and then he can manage for himself, even if he be obliged to fight with both of them at once. As for Jurandowna, about whom you have heard, I will tell you this: there is no wood growing for a bed for the other girl."

"If he prefers the other girl, then I do not care about him," answered Jagienka, through her tears.

"Then why do you weep?"

"Because I am afraid for him."

"Woman's sense!" said the abbot, laughing.

Then having bent toward Jagienka's ear, he said:

"You must remember, dear girl, that even if he take you, he will be obliged to fight just the same; a nobleman must be a knight." Here he bent still closer and added:

"And he will take you, and before long, as God is in heaven!"

"I do not know about that!" answered Jagienka.

But she began to smile through her tears, and to look at the abbot as if she wished to ask him how he knew it.

Meanwhile, Zbyszko having returned to Krzesnia, went directly to the priest, because he really wished to have a mass read for Macko's health; after having settled about that, he went to the inn, where he expected to find young Wilk of Brzozowa, and Cztan of Rogow.

He found both of them there, and also many other people, noblemen, farmers and a few "mad-cap fellows" showing different German tricks. At first he could not recognize anybody, because the windows of the inn being made of ox bladders, did not let in a good light; but when the servant put some resinous wood on the fire, he noticed in the corner behind the beer buckets, Cztan's hairy cheeks, and Wilk's furious face.

Then he walked slowly toward them, pushing aside the people; when he reached them, he struck the table so heavily with his fist that the noise resounded throughout the whole inn.

They arose immediately and began to turn their girdles; but before they could grasp the hilts of their swords, Zbyszko threw down a glove, and

speaking through his nose, as the knights used to speak while challenging, he said these words which were unexpected by everybody :

" If either of you, or any other knightly person here present, deny that the most beautiful and most virtuous girl in the world is *Panna* Danuta Juran-downa of Spsychow, that one I will challenge to combat, on horseback or on foot, until the first kneeling, or until the last breath."

Wilk and Cztan were astonished as much as the abbot would have been, had he heard Zbyszko's words; and for a while they could not say a word. Who was this *panna*? They cared about Jagienka and not about her; and if this youth did not care for Jagienka, then what did he wish? Why had he made them angry in the church-yard? What did he return for, and why did he wish to quarrel with them? These questions produced such confusion in their minds, that they opened their mouths widely and stared at Zbyszko as if he were not a man, but some German wonder.

But the more intelligent Wilk, who was a little familiar with chivalrous customs and knew that often a knight served one lady, but married another, thought that this must be a similar case, and that he must seize the opportunity to defend Jagienka.

Therefore he came out from behind the table, and coming close to Zbyszko, asked threateningly :

" Then, you dog-brother, you mean to say that Jagienka Zychowna is not the most beautiful girl in the world? "

Cztan followed him; and the people surrounded them, because they understood that it would not end in words.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Jagienka reached home, she immediately sent a servant to Krzesnia to learn whether there had been a fight in the inn, or whether there had been a challenge. But the servant having received a *skojec*,¹ began to drink with the priest's servants, and did not hasten. Another servant who had been sent to Bogdaniec to inform Macko that the abbot was going to pay him a visit, returned, having fulfilled the commission and reported that he had seen Zbyszko playing dice with the old man. This partly soothed Jagienka, because knowing by experience how dexterous Zbyszko was, she was not so much afraid about a regular duel, as she was about some unexpected accident in the inn. She wanted to accompany the abbot to Bogdaniec, but he was not willing. He wished to talk with Macko about the pledge and about some other important business; and then he wanted to go there toward night. Having learned that Zbyszko had returned home safe, he became very jovial and ordered his wandering seminarists to sing and shout. They obeyed him so well that the forest resounded with the noise, and in Bogdaniec, the farmers came out from their houses, and looked to see whether there was a fire or an invasion of the enemy. The pilgrim riding ahead, quieted them by telling them that a high ecclesiastical dignitary

¹ Piece of money; it is twenty-fourth part of *grzywna* or mark, which was worth half pound of silver; one *skojec* was worth about one-third of an ounce.

was coming; therefore when they saw the abbot, they bowed to him, and some of them even made the sign of the cross on their chests; he seeing how they respected him, rode along with joyful pride, pleased with the world and full of kindness toward the people.

Macko and Zhyszko having heard the singing, came to the gate to meet him. Some of the seminarists had been in Bogdaniec before with the abbot; but others of them having joined the retinue lately, had never seen it until now. They were disappointed when they saw the miserable house which could not be compared with the large mansion in Zgorzelice. But they were reassured when they saw the smoke coming out from the thatched roof of the house: and they were greatly pleased when upon entering the room, they smelt saffron and different kinds of meats, and noticed two tables full of tin dishes, empty as yet, but enormous. On the smaller table which was prepared for the abbot, shone a silver dish and also a beautifully engraved silver cup, both taken with the other treasures from the Fryzes.

Macko and Zhyszko invited them to the table immediately; but the abbot who had eaten plentifully in Zgorzelice, refused because he had something else on his mind. Since his arrival he had looked at Zhyszko attentively and uneasily, as if he desired to see on him some traces of the fight; but seeing the quiet face of the youth, he began to be impatient: finally he was unable to restrain his curiosity any longer.

"Let us go into the chamber," said he, "to speak about the pledge. Do not refuse me; that will make me angry!"

Here he turned to the seminarists and shouted :

"You keep quiet and do not listen at the door!"

Having said this, he opened the door to the chamber and entered, followed by Zbyszko and Macko. As soon as they were seated on the chests, the abbot turned toward the young knight :

"Did you go back to Krzesnia?" asked he.

"Yes, I was there."

"And what?"

"Well, I paid for a mass for my uncle's health, that's all."

The abbot moved on the chest impatiently.

"Ha!" thought he, "he did not meet Cztan and Wilk; perhaps they were not there, and perhaps he did not look for them. I was mistaken."

But he was angry because he was mistaken, and because his plans had not been realized; therefore immediately his face grew red and he began to breathe loudly.

"Let us speak about the pledge!" said he. "Have you the money? If not, then the estate is mine!"

Macko, who knew how to act with him, rose silently, opened the chest on which he was sitting, and took out of it a bag of *grzywien*, evidently prepared for this occasion, and said :

"We are poor people, but we have the money; we will pay what is right, as it is written in the 'letter' which I signed with the mark of the holy cross. If you want to be paid for the improvements, we will not quarrel about that either; we will pay the amount you say, and we will bow to you, our benefactor."

Having said this, he kneeled at the abbot's knee

and Zbyszko did the same. The abbot, who expected some quarrels and arguing, was very much surprised at such a proceeding, and not very much pleased with it; he wanted to dictate some conditions and he saw that he would have no opportunity to do so.

Therefore returning the "letter" or rather the mortgage which Macko had signed with a cross, he said:

"Why are you talking to me about an additional payment?"

"Because we do not want to receive any presents," answered Macko cunningly, knowing well that the more he quarreled in that matter the more he would get.

At this the abbot reddened with anger:

"Did you ever see such people? They do not wish to accept anything from a relative! You have too much bread! I did not take waste land and I do not return it waste; and if I want to give you this bag, I will do it!"

"You would not do that!" exclaimed Macko.

"I will not do it! Here is your pledge! Here is your money! I give it because I want to, and had I even thrown it into the road, it would be none of your affairs. You shall see if I will not do as I wish!"

Having said this, he seized the bag and threw it on the floor so hard that it burst, and the money was scattered.

"May God reward you! May God reward you, father and benefactor!" exclaimed Macko, who had been waiting for this; "I would not accept it from anyone else, but from a relation and a spiritual father, I will accept it."

The abbot looked threateningly at both of them, and finally he said:

"Although I am angry, I know what I am doing; therefore hold what you have, because I assure you that you shall not have one *skojeć* more."

"We did not expect even this."

"You know that Jagienka will inherit everything I have."

"The land also?" asked Macko, simply.

"The land also!" shouted the abbot.

At this Macko's face grew long, but he recovered himself and said:

"Ej, why should you think about death! May the Lord Jesus grant you a hundred years or more of life, and an important bishopric soon."

"Certainly! Am I worse than others?" said the abbot.

"Not worse, but better!"

These words appeased the abbot, for his anger never lasted long.

"Well," said he, "you are my relations, and she is only my goddaughter; but I love her, and Zych also. There is no better man in the world than Zych and no better girl than Jagienka, also! Who can say anything against them?"

He began to look angry, but Macko did not contradict; he quickly affirmed that there was no worthier neighbor in the whole kingdom.

"And as for the girl," said he, "I could not love my own daughter any more than I love her. With her help, I recovered my health and I shall never forget it until my death."

"You will both be punished if you forget it," said the abbot, "and I will curse you. But I do

not wish to wrong you, therefore I have found a way by which, what I will leave after my death, can belong to you and to Jagienka; do you understand?"

"May God help us to realize that!" answered Macko. "Sweet Jesus! I would go on foot to the grave of the queen in Krakow or to Lysa Gora¹ to bow to the Holy Cross."

The abbot was very much pleased with such sincerity; he smiled and said:

"The girl is perfectly right to be particular in her choice, because she is pretty, rich and of good family! Of what account are Cztan or Wilk, when the son of a *wojewoda* would not be too good for her! But if somebody, as myself for instance, spoke in favor of any particular one, then she would marry him, because she loves me and knows that I will advise her well."

"The one whom you advise her to marry, will be very lucky," said Macko.

But the abbot turned to Zbyszko:

"What do you say to this?"

"Well, I think the same as my uncle does."

The face of the abbot became still more serene; he struck Zbyszko's shoulder with his hand so hard that the blow resounded in the chamber, and asked:

"Why did you not let Cztan or Wilk approach Jagienka at church?"

"Because I did not want them to think that I was afraid of them, and I did not want you to think so."

¹ "Bold Mountain"—a place in Poland, where one of the first three Benedictine monasteries was built by the king, Boleslaw Chrobry (the Valiant) 1125. In this monastery is a part of our Saviour's cross—hence pilgrimages to that place.

"But you gave the holy water to her."

"Yes, I did."

The abbot gave him another blow.

"Then, take her!"

"Take her!" exclaimed Macko, like an echo.

At this Zbyszko gathered up his hair, put it in the net, and answered quietly:

"How can I take her, when before the altar in Tyniec, I made a vow to Danusia Jurandowna?"

"You made a vow about the peacock's tufts, and you must get them, but take Jagienka immediately."

"No," answered Zbyszko; "afterward when Danusia covered me with her veil, I promised that I would marry her."

The blood began to rush to the abbot's face; his ears turned blue, and his eyes bulged; he approached Zbyszko and said, in a voice muffled with anger:

"Your vows are the chaff and I am the wind; understand! Ot!"

And he blew on Zbyszko's head so powerfully, that the net fell off and the hair was scattered on his shoulders. Then Zbyszko frowned, and looking into the abbot's eyes, he said:

"In my vows is my honor, and over my honor, I alone am the guardian!"

At this, the abbot not being accustomed to opposition, lost his breath to such a degree, that for a time he could not speak. There was an ill-omened silence, which finally was broken by Macko:

"Zbyszku!" exclaimed he, "come to your wits again! What is the matter with you?"

Meanwhile the abbot raised his hand and pointing toward the youth, began to shout:

"What is the matter with him? I know what



ZBYSZKO PRESENTING PEACOCK FEATHERS
TO DANUSIA



is the matter; he has not the heart of a nobleman, nor of a knight, but of a hare! That is the matter with him; he is afraid of Cztań and Wilk!"

But Zbyszko, who had remained cool and calm, carelessly shrugged his shoulders and answered:

"Owa! I broke their heads when I was in Krzesnia."

"For heaven's sake!" exclaimed Macko.

The abbot stared for a while at Zbyszko. Anger was struggling with admiration in him, and his reason told him that from that fight, he might derive some benefit for his plans.

Therefore having become cooler, he shouted to Zbyszko:

"Why didn't you tell us that before?"

"Because I was ashamed. I thought they would challenge me, as it is customary for knights to do, to fight on horseback or on foot; but they are bandits, not knights. Wilk first took a board from the table, Cztań seized another and they both rushed against me! What could I do? I seized a bench; well—you know!"

"Are they still alive?" asked Macko.

"Yes, they are alive, but they were hurt. They breathed when I left."

The abbot, rubbing his forehead, listened; then he suddenly jumped from the chest, on which he had seated himself to be more comfortable and to think the matter over, and exclaimed:

"Wait! I want to tell you something!"

"What?" asked Zbyszko.

"If you fought for Jagienka and injured them for her sake, then you are really her knight, not Danusia's; and you must take Jagienka."

Having said this, he put his hands on his hips

and looked at Zbyszko triumphantly ; but Zbyszko smiled and said :

" Hej ! I knew very well why you wanted me to fight with them ; but you have not succeeded in your plans."

" Why ? Speak !"

" Because I challenged them to deny that Danusia Jurandowna is the prettiest and the most virtuous girl in the world ; they took Jagienka's part, and that is why there was a fight."

Having heard this, the abbot stood amazed, and only the frequent movement of his eyes indicated that he was still alive. Finally he turned, opened the door with his foot, and rushed into the other room ; there he seized the curved stick from the pilgrim's hands and began to strike the *shpilmen* with it, roaring like a wounded urus.

" To horse, you rascals ! To horse, you dog-faiths ! I will not put my foot in this house again ! To horse, he who believes in God, to horse !"

Then he opened the outer door and went into the court-yard, followed by the frightened seminarists. They rushed to the stable and began to saddle the horses. In vain Macko followed the abbot, and entreated him to remain ; swore that it was not his fault. The abbot cursed the house, the people and the fields ; when they brought him a horse, he jumped in the saddle without touching the stirrups and galloped away looking, with his large sleeves filled by the wind, like an enormous red bird. The seminarists rushed after him, like a herd following its leader.

Macko stood looking after them for some time ; but when they disappeared in the forest, he re-

turned slowly to the room and said to Zbyszko, shaking his head sadly :

" See what you have done ? "

" It would not have happened if I had gone away ; and it is your fault that I did not."

" Why ? "

" Because I did not wish to leave you when you were sick."

" And what will you do now ? "

" Now I shall go."

" Where ? "

" To Mazowsze to see Danusia ; and after that to search for peacock's tufts among the Germans."

Macko was silent for a moment, then he said :

" He returned the ' letter,' but the mortgage is recorded in the mortgage-book at the court. Now the abbot will not give us even a *skojec*."

" I do not care. You have money, and I do not need anything for my journey. I will be received everywhere and my horses will be fed ; if I only had a suit of armor on my back and a sword in my hand, I would need nothing else."

Macko began to think about everything that had happened. All his plans and wishes had been frustrated. He had wished with his whole heart that Zbyszko would marry Jagienka ; but he now realized that this wish would never be fulfilled ; and considering the abbot's anger, the behavior of Zbyszko toward Jagienka and finally the fight with Cztań and Wilk, he concluded it would be better to allow Zbyszko to go.

" Ha ! " said he, finally, " if you must seek for the peacock's feathers on the heads of the Knights of the Cross, go then. Let the Lord Jesus' will be accomplished. But I must go immediately to

Zgorzelice ; perhaps I will succeed in appeasing their wrath if I implore pardon of the abbot and of Zych ; I care especially for the friendship of Zych."

Here he looked into Zbyszko's eyes and asked :

"Do you not regret Jagienka ? "

"May God give her health and the best of everything !" answered Zbyszko.

END OF PART SECOND.

PART THIRD.



CHAPTER I.

MACKO waited patiently for several days, hoping to receive some news from Zgorzelice, or to hear that the abbot's anger had been appeased; finally he became impatient and determined to go personally to see Zych. Everything had happened contrary to his wishes, and now he was anxious to know whether Zych was angry with him. He was afraid that the abbot would never be reconciled with Zbyszko and him. He wanted, however, to do everything he could, to soften that anger; therefore while riding, he was thinking what he would say in Zgorzelice, to palliate the offence and preserve the old friendship with his neighbor. His thoughts, however, were not clear, therefore he was glad to find Jagienka alone; the girl received him as usual with a bow and kissed his hand,—in a word, she was friendly, but a little sad.

"Is your father home?" asked he.

"He went out hunting with the abbot. They may be back at any moment."

Having said this, she conducted him into the house, where they both sat in silence for a long time; the girl spoke first, and said:

"Are you lonely now in Bogdaniec?"

"Very lonely," answered Macko. "Then you knew that Zbyszko had gone away?"

Jagienka sighed softly:

"Yes, I knew it the very same day; I thought he would come here to bid me good-bye, but he did not."

"How could he come!" said Macko. "The abbot would have torn him to pieces; neither would your father have welcomed him."

She shook her head and said:

"Ej! I would not allow anybody to injure him."

Upon this Macko hugged the girl and said:

"God be with you, girl! You are sad, but I also am sad. Let me tell you that neither the abbot nor your own father loves you more than I do. I wish that Zbyszko had chosen you, and not another."

There came upon Jagienka such a moment of grief and longing, that she could not conceal her feelings, but said:

"I shall never see him again, or if I see him, it will be with Jurandowna, and then I will cry my eyes out."

She raised her apron and covered her eyes, which were filled with tears.

Macko said:

"Stop crying! He has gone, but with God's grace, he will not come back with Jurandowna."

"Why not?" said Jagienka, from behind her apron.

"Because Jurand does not want to give him the girl."

Then Jagienka suddenly uncovered her face, and having turned toward Macko, said to him:

"Zbyszko told me that; but is it true?"

"As true as that God is in heaven."

"But why?"

"Who knows why. Some vow, or something like that, and there is no remission for vows! He liked Zbyszko, because the boy promised to help him in his vengeance; but even that was useless.

Jurand would listen neither to persuasion, nor to command, nor to prayers. He said he could not. Well, there must be some reason why he could not do it, and he will not change his mind, because he is stern and unyielding. Don't lose hope but cheer up. Rightly speaking, the boy was obliged to go, because he had sworn in the church to secure three peacocks' crests. Then, also, the girl covered him with her veil, which was a sign that she would take him for her husband; otherwise they would have beheaded him; for that, he must be grateful to her—one cannot deny it. With God's help, she will not be his; but according to the law, he is hers. Zych is angry with him; the abbot has sent a plague upon him, so that his skin shivers; I am angry also, but if one thinks carefully, what else could he do? Since he belonged to the other girl, he was obliged to go. He is a nobleman. But I tell you this; if the Germans do not kill him, then he will come back; and he will come back not only to me an old man, not only to Bogdaniec, but to you, because he was very fond of you."

"I don't believe he was!" said Jagienka.

But she drew near Macko, and having touched him with her elbow, she asked:

"How do you know it? I am sure that is not true."

"How do I know?" answered Macko. "I saw how difficult it was for him to go away. When it was decided that he must go, I asked him: 'Do you not regret Jagienka?' and he said: 'May God give her health and the best of everything.' Then immediately he began to sigh."

"I am sure that it is not true!" said Jagienka, softly; "but tell me again."

"As God is dear to me, it is true! After seeing you, he will not care for the other girl, because you know yourself that there is no girl more beautiful than you in the whole world. He has felt God's will toward you—do not fear—perhaps even more than you have felt it toward him."

"Not at all!" exclaimed Jagienka. Then she again covered her face, which was as rosy as an apple, with her sleeve; Macko smiled, passed his hand over his moustache and said:

"Hej! if I were only younger; but you must comfort yourself, because I see how it will be. He will get his spurs at the Mazowiecki court, because that is near the boundary and it is not difficult to kill a Krzyzak there. I know that there are good knights among the Germans; but I think that it will take a very good one to defeat Zbyszko. See how he routed Cztań of Rogow and Wilk of Brzozowa, although they are said to be dreadful boys and as strong as bears. He will bring his crests, but he will not bring Jurandowna."

"But when will he return?"

"Bah! if you are not willing to wait, then you will not be wronged. Repeat what I have told you to the abbot and to Zych; perhaps they will not be so angry with Zbyszko."

"How can I tell them anything? *Tatus* is more sorrowful than angry; but it is dangerous even to mention Zbyszko's name to the abbot. He scolded me because I sent Zbyszko a servant."

"What servant?"

"We had a Czech, whom *tatus* captured at Bolesławiec, a good, faithful boy. His name was Hława. *Tatus* gave him to my service, because he was a *włodyka*; I gave him a worthy armor and sent him

to Zbyszko, to serve and protect him. I also gave him a bag of money for the journey. He promised me that he would serve Zbyszko faithfully until death."

"My dear girl! may God reward you! Was Zych opposed to your doing it?"

"Yes, at first *tatus* did not want to let me do it; but when I began to coax him, then he consented. When the abbot heard about it from his seminarists, he immediately rushed out of the room swearing; there was such a disturbance, that *tatus* escaped to the barn. Toward evening, the abbot took pity on my tears and even made me a present of some beads."

"As God is dear to me, I do not know whether I love Zbyszko any better than I love you; but he had a worthy retinue. I also gave him money, although he did not want to take it. Well, the Mazurs are not beyond the seas."

The conversation was interrupted by the barking of dogs, by shouting and by the sounds of brass trumpets in front of the house. Having heard this, Jagienka said:

"*Tatus* and the abbot have returned from hunting. Let us go outside; it will be better for the abbot to see you there, and not to meet you unexpectedly in the house."

Having said this, she conducted Macko out-of-doors; in the courtyard, on the snow they perceived a throng of men, horses and dogs, also elks and wolves pierced with spears or shot with cross-bows. The abbot saw Macko before he dismounted, and hurled a spear toward him, not to strike him, but to show in that way, his great anger against the inhabitants of Bogdaniec. But Macko uncov-

ered and bowed to him as if he noticed nothing unusual ; Jagienka, however, had not noticed the abbot's action, because she was very much surprised to see her two wooers in the retinue.

" Cztań and Wilk are here ! " she exclaimed ; " I presume they met *tatus* in the forest."

Immediately the thought ran through Macko's mind, that perhaps one of them would get Jagienka, and with her Moczydoly, the abbot's lands, forests and money. Then grief and anger filled his heart, especially when he perceived what occurred. Behold, Wilk of Brzozowa, although only a short time before the abbot wanted to fight with his father, sprang to the abbot's stirrups, and helped him to dismount ; and the abbot leaned in a friendly manner on the young nobleman's shoulder.

" In that way, the abbot will become reconciled with old Wilk," thought Macko, " and he will give the forests and the lands with the girl."

His sad thoughts were interrupted by Jagienka who said :

" They are soon cured after Zbyszko's beating ; but even if they come here every day, it will not benefit them ! "

Macko looked and saw that the girl's face was red with anger, and that her blue eyes sparkled with indignation, although she knew very well that Cztań and Wilk had taken her part in the inn, and had been beaten on her account.

Therefore Macko said :

" Bah ! you will do as the abbot commands."

She immediately retorted :

" The abbot will do what I wish."

" Gracious Lord ! " thought Macko, " and that stupid Zbyszko left such a girl ! "

CHAPTER II.

ZBYSZKO had left Bogdaniec with a sad heart indeed. In the first place he felt strange without his uncle, from whom he had never been separated before, and to whom he was so accustomed, that he did not know how he would get along without him during the journey, as well as in the war. Then he regretted Jagienka. Although he was going to Danusia whom he loved dearly, still he had been so comfortable and happy with Jagienka, that now he felt sad without her. He was surprised himself at his grief, and even somewhat alarmed about it. He would not have minded if he longed for Jagienka only as a brother longs for a sister; but he noticed that he longed to embrace her, to put her on horseback, to carry her over the brooks, to wring the water from her tress, to wander with her in the forest, to gaze at her, and to converse with her. He was so accustomed to doing all this and it was so pleasant, that when he began to think about it, he forgot that he was going on a long journey to Mazury; instead of that, he remembered the moment when Jagienka helped him in the forest, when he was struggling with the bear. It seemed to him as though it happened only yesterday; also as though it were only yesterday when they went to the Odstajny lake for beavers. Then he recalled how beautifully she was dressed when going to church in Krzesnia, and how surprised he was that such a simple girl should appear like the daughter of a mighty lord. All these

thoughts filled his heart with uneasiness, sweetness, and sadness.

"Had I only bid her good-bye," he said to himself, "perhaps I would feel easier now."

Finally he became afraid of these reminiscences, and he shook them from his mind like dry snow from his mantle.

"I am going to Danusia, to my dearest," he said to himself.

He noticed that this was a more holy love. Gradually his feet grew colder in the stirrups, and the cold wind cooled his blood. All his thoughts now turned to Danusia Jurandowna. He belonged to her without any doubt; but for her, he would have been beheaded on the Krakowski square. When she said in the presence of the knights and burghers: "He is mine!" she rescued him from the hands of the executioners; from that time, he belonged to her, as a slave to his master. Jurand's opposition was useless. She alone could drive him away; and even then he would not go far, because he was bound by his vow. He imagined, however, that she would not drive him away; but rather that she would follow him from the Mazowiecki court, even to the end of the world. Then he began to praise her to himself to Jagienka's disadvantage, as if it were her fault, that temptations assailed him and his heart was divided. Now he forgot that Jagienka cured old Macko; he forgot that without her help, the bear would have torn him to pieces; and he became enraged with her, hoping in this way to please Danusia and to justify himself in his own eyes.

At this moment the Czech, Hlawa, sent by Jagienka, arrived, leading a horse.

"Be blessed!" said he, with a low bow.

Zbyszko had seen him once or twice in Zgorzelice, but he did not recognize him; therefore he said:

"Be blessed for ages and ages! Who are you?"

"Your servant, famous lord."

"What do you mean? These are my servants," said Zbyszko, pointing to the two Turks, given to him by Sulimczyk Zawisza, and to two sturdy men who sitting on horseback, were leading the knight's stallions; "these are mine; who sent you?"

"*Panna Jagienka Zychowna of Zgorzelice.*"

"*Panna Jagienka?*"

Awhile ago, Zbyszko had been angry with her and his heart was still full of wrath; therefore he said:

"Return home and thank the *panna* for the favor; I do not want you."

But the Czech shook his head.

"I cannot return. They have given me to you; besides that, I have sworn to serve you until death."

"If they gave you to me, then you are my servant."

"Yours, sir."

"Then I command you to return."

"I have sworn; although I am a prisoner from Boleslawiec and a poor boy, still I am a *wlodyczka*."¹

Zbyszko became angry:

"Go away! What; are you going to serve me against my will? Go away, before I order my servants to bend their crossbows."

But the Czech quietly untied a broadcloth mantle, lined with wolf-skins, handed it to Zbyszko and said:

¹ Diminutive of *wlodyka*.

"*Panna Jagienka* sent you this, also, sir."

"Do you wish me to break your bones?" asked Zbyszko, taking a spear from an attendant.

"Here is also a bag of money for your disposal," answered the Czech.

Zbyszko was ready to strike him with the lance, but he recollected that the boy, although a prisoner, was by birth a *wlodyka*, who had remained with Zych only because he did not have money to pay his ransom; consequently Zbyszko dropped the spear.

Then the Czech bent to his stirrups and said:

"Be not angry, sir. If you do not wish me to accompany you, I will follow you at a distance of one or two furlongs; but I must go, because I have sworn to do so upon the salvation of my soul."

"If I order my servants to kill you or to bind you?"

"If you order them to kill me, that will not be my sin; and if you order them to bind me, then I will remain until some good people untie me, or until the wolves devour me."

Zbyszko did not reply; he urged his horse forward and his attendants followed him. The Czech with a crossbow and an axe on his shoulder, followed them, shielding himself with a shaggy bison skin, because a sharp wind carrying flakes of snow, began to blow. The storm grew worse and worse. The Turks, although dressed in sheepskin coats, were chilled with cold; Zbyszko himself, not being dressed very warmly, glanced several times at the mantle lined with wolf-fur, which Hlawa had brought him; after a while, he told one of the Turks to give it to him.

Having wrapped himself with it carefully, he felt

a warmth spreading all over his body. He covered his eyes and the greater part of his face with the hood of the mantle, so that the wind did not annoy him any more. Then, involuntarily, he thought how good Jagienka had been to him. He reined in his horse, called the Czech, and asked him about her, and about everything that had happened in Zgorzelice.

"Does Zych know that the *panna* sent you to me?" he said.

"He knows it," answered Hlawa.

"Was he not opposed to it?"

"He was."

"Tell me then all about it."

"The *pan* was walking in the room and the *panna* followed him. He shouted, but the *panienka* said nothing; but when he turned toward her, she kneeled but did not utter one word. Finally the *panisko*² said: 'Have you become deaf, that you do not answer my questions? Speak then; perhaps I will consent.' Then the *panna* understood that she could do as she wished and began to thank him. The *pan* reproached her, because she had persuaded him, and complained that he must always do as she wished; finally he said: 'Promise me that you will not go secretly to bid him good-bye; then I will consent, but not otherwise.' Then the *panienka* became very sorrowful, but she promised; the *pan* was satisfied, because the abbot and he were both afraid that she would see you. Well, that was not the end of it; afterward the *panna* wanted to send two horses, but the *pan* would not consent; the *panna* wanted to send a

² Another form of *pan*—lord; when one speaks in commiseration or in sympathy, any noun can take this form.

wolf-skin and a bag of money, but the *pan* refused. His refusal did not amount to anything, however! If she wanted to set the house on fire, the *panisko* would finally consent. Therefore I brought two horses, a wolf-skin and a bag of money."

"Good girl!" thought Zbyszko. After a while he asked:

"Was there no trouble with the abbot?" The Czech, an intelligent attendant, who understood what happened around him, smiled and answered:

"They were both careful to keep everything secret from the abbot; I do not know what happened when he learned about it, after I left Zgorzelice. Sometimes he shouts at the *panienka*; but afterward he watches her to see if he did not wrong her. I saw him myself one time after he had scolded her, go to his chest and bring out such a beautiful chain that one could not get a better one even in Krakow, and give it to her. She will manage the abbot also, because her own father does not love her any more than he does."

"That is certainly true."

"As God is in heaven!"

Then they became silent and rode along amidst wind and snow. Suddenly Zbyszko reined in his horse; from the forest beside the road, there was heard a plaintive voice, half stifled by the roar of the wind:

"Christians, help God's servant in his misfortune!"

Thereupon a man who was dressed partly in clerical clothing, rushed to the road and began to cry to Zbyszko:

"Whoever you are, sir, help a fellow-creature who has met with a dreadful accident!"

"What has happened to you, and who are you?" asked the young knight.

"I am God's servant, although not yet ordained; this morning the horse which was carrying my chests containing holy things, ran away. I remained alone, without weapons; evening is approaching, and soon the wild beasts will begin to roar in the forest. I shall perish, unless you succor me."

"If I let you perish," answered Zbyszko, "I will be accountable for your sins; but how can I believe that you are speaking the truth. You may be a highway robber, like many others wandering on the roads!"

"You may believe me, sir, for I will show you the chests. Many a man would give a purse full of gold for what is in them; but I will give you some of it for nothing, if you take me and the chests with you."

"You told me that you were God's servant, and yet you do not know that one must give help, not for earthly recompense, but for spiritual reward. But how is it that you have the chests now if the horse carried them away?"

"The wolves devoured the horse in the forest, but the chests remained; I brought them to the road, and then waited for mercy and help."

Wishing to prove that he was speaking the truth, he pointed to two chests made of leather, lying under a pine tree. Zbyszko still looked at him suspiciously, because the man did not look honest, and his speech indicated that he came from a distant part of the country. He did not refuse to help him, however, but permitted him to ride the horse led by the Czech and take the chests, which proved to be very light.

"May God multiply your victories, valiant knight!" said the stranger.

Then, seeing Zbyszko's youthful face, he added softly :

"And the hairs of your beard, also."

He rode beside the Czech. For a time they could not talk, because a strong wind was blowing, and roaring in the forest; but when it decreased, Zbyszko heard the following conversation behind him.

"I don't deny that you were in Rome; but you look like a beer drunkard," said the Czech.

"Look out for eternal damnation," answered the stranger; "you are talking to a man who last Easter ate hard boiled eggs with the holy father. Don't speak to me in such cold weather about beer; but if you have a flask of wine with you, then give me two or three swallows of it, and I will pardon you a month of purgatory."

"You have not been ordained; I heard you say you had not. How then can you grant me pardon for a month of purgatory?"

"I have not received ordination, but I have my head shaved, because I received permission for that; beside, I am carrying indulgences and relics."

"In the chests?" asked the Czech.

"Yes, in the chests. If you saw all I have there, you would fall on your face, not only you, but all the pines in the forest and all the wild beasts."

But the Czech, being an intelligent and experienced attendant, looked suspiciously at this peddler of indulgences, and said :

"The wolves devoured your horse?"

"Yes, they devoured him, because they are the devil's relatives. If you have any wine, give me some; although the wind has ceased, yet I am frozen, having sat by the road so long."

The Czech would not give him any wine; and they rode along silently, until the stranger began to ask:

"Where are you going?"

"Far. At first to Sieradz. Are you going with us?"

"I must. I will sleep in the stable, and perhaps to-morrow this pious knight will give me a present of a horse; then I will go further."

"Where are you from?"

"From under Prussian lords, not far from Marienburg."

Having heard this, Zbyszko turned and motioned to the stranger to come nearer to him.

"Did you come from Marienburg?" said he

"Yes, sir."

"But are you a German? You speak our language very well. What is your name?"

"I am a German, and they call me Sanderus; I speak your language well, because I was born in Torun, where everybody speaks that language; then I lived in Marienburg, and there it is the same. Bah! even the brothers of the Order understand your language."

"How long since you left Marienburg?"

"I was in the Holy Land, then in Constantinople, and in Rome; thence through France I came to Marienburg and from there I was going to Mazowsze, carrying the holy relics which pious Christians buy willingly, for the salvation of their souls."

"Have you been in Plock or in Warszawa?"

"I was in both cities. May God give good health to both of the princesses! Princess Alexandra is greatly esteemed even by the Prussian lords, because she is a pious lady; the princess Anna Januszowna is also pious."

"Did you see the court in Warszawa?"

"I did not see it in Warszawa but in Ciechanow, where both the princesses received me hospitably, and gave me munificent presents, as God's servant deserves to receive. I left them relics, which will bring them God's blessing."

Zbyszko wanted to ask about Danusia; but he understood that it would be unwise to make a confidant of this stranger, a man of low origin. Therefore, after a short silence, he asked:

"What kind of relics are you carrying?"

"I carry indulgences and relics; the indulgences are different kinds; there are total indulgences, some for five hundred years, some for three hundred, some for two hundred and some for less time, which are cheaper, so that even poor people can buy them and shorten the torments of purgatory. I have indulgences for future and for past sins; but don't think, sir, that I keep the money I receive for them. I am satisfied with a piece of black bread and a glass of water—that is all for me; the rest I carry to Rome, to accumulate enough for a new crusade. It is true, there are many swindlers who carry false indulgences, false relics, false seals and false testimonials; and they are righteously pursued by the holy father's letters; but I was wronged by the prior of Sieradz, because my seals are authentic. Look, sir, at the wax and tell me what you think of them."

"What about the prior of Sieradz?"

"Ah, sir! I fear that he is infected with Wiclef's heresy. If, as your shield-bearer told me, you are going to Sieradz, it will be better for me not to show myself to him, because I do not want to lead him into the sin of blasphemy against holy things."

"This means, speaking frankly, that he thinks that you are a swindler."

"If the question were about myself, I would pardon him for the sake of brotherly love; but he has blasphemed against my holy wares, for which, I am very much afraid, he will be eternally damned."

"What kind of holy wares have you?"

"It is not right to talk about them with covered head; but this time, having many indulgences ready, I give you, sir, permission to keep your cowl on, because the wind is blowing again. For that you will buy an indulgence and the sin will not be counted against you. What have I not? I have a hoof of the ass on which the Holy Family rode during the flight into Egypt; it was found near the pyramids. The king of Aragon offered me fifty ducats for it. I have a feather from the wings of the archangel Gabriel, which he dropped during the annunciation; I have the heads of two quails, sent to the Israelites in the desert; I have the oil in which the heathen wanted to fry St. John; a step of the ladder about which Jacob dreamed; the tears of St. Mary of Egypt and some rust of St. Peter's keys. But I cannot mention any more. I am very cold and your shield-bearer would not give me any wine."

"Those are great relics, if they are authentic!" said Zbyszko.

"If they are authentic? Take the spear from your attendant and aim it, because the devil is

near and brings such thoughts to you. Hold him, sir, at the length of the spear. If you do not wish to bring some misfortune on yourself, then buy an indulgence from me; otherwise within three weeks somebody whom you love, will die."

Zbyszko was frightened at this threat, because he thought about Danusia, and said:

"It is not I, but the prior of the Dominicans in Sieradz who does not believe."

"Look, sir, for yourself, at the wax on the seals; as for the prior, I do not know whether he is still living, because God's justice is quick."

But when they came to Sieradz they found the prior alive. Zbyszko went to see him, and purchased two masses; one of which was to be read to insure success for Macko's vow, and the other to insure success for his vow to obtain three peacocks' crests. The prior was a foreigner, having been born in Cylia; but during his forty years' residence in Sieradz, he had learned the Polish language very well, and was a great enemy of the Knights of the Cross. Therefore, having learned about Zbyszko's enterprise, he said:

"A still greater punishment will fall upon them; but I shall not dissuade you, because you promised it upon your knightly honor; neither can there be punishment enough administered by Polish hands for the wrongs they have perpetrated in this land."

"What have they done?" asked Zbyszko, who was anxious to hear about the iniquities of the Knights of the Cross.

CHAPTER III.

THE old prior crossed his hands and began to recite aloud "The eternal rest ;"¹ then he sat down on a bench and kept his eyes closed for a while as if to collect his thoughts ; finally he began to talk :

"Wincenty of Szamotul brought them here. I was twenty years old then, and I had just come from Cylia with my uncle Petzoldt. The Krzyzaks attacked the town and set it on fire. We could see from the walls, how in the market square they cut men and women's heads off, and how they threw little children into the fire. They even killed the priests, because in their fury they spared nobody. The prior Mikolaj, having been born in Elblong, was acquainted with *Comthur* Herman, the chief of their army. Therefore he went accompanied by the senior brothers, to that dreadful knight, and having kneeled before him, entreated him in German, to have pity on Christian blood. *Comthur* Herman replied: "I do not understand," and ordered his soldiers to continue killing the people. They slaughtered the monks also, among them my uncle Petzoldt ; the prior Mikolaj was tied to a horse's tail. The next morning there was no man alive in this town except the Krzyzaks and myself. I hid on a beam in the belfry. God punished them at Plowce ;² but they still want to destroy this Christian king-

¹ A short prayer for the dead.

² The famous victory over the Knights of the Cross by the king Wladyslaw Lokietek.

dom, and nothing will deter them unless God's arm crush them."

"At Plowce," said Zbyszko, "almost all the men of my family perished; but I do not regret it, for God granted a great victory to the king Lokietek,¹ and twenty thousand Germans were destroyed.

"You will see a still greater war and a greater victory," said the prior.

"Amen!" answered Zbyszko.

Then they began to talk about other matters. The young knight asked about the peddler of relics whom he met on the road. He learned that many similar swindlers were wandering on the roads, cheating credulous people. The prior also told him that there were papal bulls ordering the bishops to examine such peddlers and immediately punish those who did not have authentic letters and seals. The testimonials of the stranger seemed spurious to the prior; therefore he wanted to deliver him to the bishop's jurisdiction. If he proved that he was sent by the pope, then no harm would be done him. He escaped, however. Perhaps he was afraid of the delay in his journey; but on account of this flight, he had drawn on himself still greater suspicion.

The prior invited Zbyszko to remain and pass the night in the monastery; but he would not, because he wanted to hang in front of the inn an inscription challenging all knights who denied that *Panna Danuta Jurandowna* was the most beautiful and the most virtuous girl in the kingdom, to a combat on horseback or on foot. It was not proper

¹ Lokietek means an ell in Polish. King Wladyslaw was of the family Piasts, but he was called Lokietek on account of his short stature.

to hang such a challenge over the gate of the monastery. When he arrived at the inn, he asked for Sanderus.

"The prior thinks you are a scoundrel," said Zbyszko, "because he said: 'Why should he be afraid of the bishop's judgment, if he had good testimonials?'"

"I am not afraid of the bishop," answered Sanderus; "I am afraid of the monks, who do not know anything about seals. I wanted to go to Krakow, but I have no horse; therefore I must wait until somebody makes me a present of one. Meanwhile, I will send a letter, and I will put my own seal on it."

"If you show that you know how to write, that will prove that you are not a churl; but how will you send the letter?"

"By some pilgrim, or wandering monk. There are many people going on a pilgrimage to the queen's tomb."

"Can you write a card for me?"

"I will write, sir, even on a board, anything you wish."

"I think it will be better on a board," said Zbyszko, "because it will not tear and I can use it again later on."

In fact, after awhile the attendants brought a new board and Sanderus wrote on it. Zbyszko could not read what was written on the board; but he ordered it fastened with nails on the door of the inn, under it to be hung a shield, which was watched by the Turks alternately. Whoever struck the shield would declare that he wished to fight. But neither that day nor the following day, did the shield resound from a blow; and in the afternoon

the sorrowful knight was ready to pursue his journey.

Before that, however, Sanderus came to Zbyszko and said to him :

"Sir, if you hang your shield in the land of the Prussian lords, I am sure your shield-bearer will buckle your armor."

"What do you mean! Don't you know that a Krzyzak, being a monk, cannot have a lady nor be in love with one, because it is forbidden him."

"I do not know whether it is forbidden them or not; but I know that they have them. It is true that a Krzyzak cannot fight a duel without bringing reproach on himself, because he swore that he would fight only for the faith; but besides the monks, there are many secular knights from distant countries, who came to help the Prussian lords. They are looking for some one to fight with, and especially the French knights."

"*Owa!* I saw them at Wilno, and with God's permission I shall see them in Marienburg. I need the peacocks' crests from their helmets, because I made a vow—do you understand?"

"Sir, I will sell you two or three drops of the perspiration, which St. George shed while fighting with the dragon. There is no relic, which could be more useful to a knight. Give me the horse for it, on which you permitted me to ride; then I will also give you an indulgence for the Christian blood which you will shed in the fight."

"Let me be, or I shall become angry. I shall not buy your wares until I know they are genuine."

"You are going, sir, so you have said, to the Mazowiecki court. Ask there how many relics they bought from me, the princess herself, the

knights and the girls for their weddings, at which I was present."

"For what weddings?" asked Zbyszko.

"As is customary before advent, the knights were marrying as soon as they could, because the people are expecting that there will be a war between the Polish king and the Prussian lords about the province of Dobrzyn. Therefore some of them say: 'God knows whether I shall return.'"

Zbyszko was very anxious to hear about the war, but still more anxious to hear about the weddings, of which Sanderus was talking; therefore he asked:

"Which girls were married there?"

"The princess' ladies-in-waiting. I do not know whether even one remained, because I heard the princess say that she would be obliged to look for other attendants."

Having heard this, Zbyszko was silent for awhile; then he asked in an altered voice:

"Was *Panna Danuta Jurandówna*, whose name is on the board, married also?"

Sanderus hesitated before he answered. He did not know anything correctly himself; then he thought that if he kept the knight anxious and perplexed, he would have more influence over him. He wanted to retain his power over this knight who had a goodly retinue, and was well provided with everything.

Zbyszko's youth led him to suppose that he would be a generous lord, without forethought and careless of money. He had noticed already the costly armor made in Milan, and the enormous stallions, which everybody could not possess; then he assured himself that if he traveled with such a

knight, he would receive hospitality in noblemen's houses, and a good opportunity to sell his indulgences; he would be safe during the journey, and have abundance of food and drink, about which he cared greatly.

Therefore having heard Zbyszko's question, he frowned, lifted his eyes as if he were trying to recollect, and answered:

"*Panna Danuta Jurandowna?* Where is she from?"

"Jurandowna Danuta of Spychow."

"I saw all of them, but I cannot remember their names."

"She is very young; she plays the lute, and amuses the princess with her singing."

"Aha—young—plays the lute—there were some young ones married also. Is she dark like an agate?"

Zbyszko breathed more freely.

"No, that was not she! Danusia is as white as snow, but has pink cheeks."

To this Sanderus replied:

"One of them, dark as an agate, remained with the princess; the others were almost all married."

"You say 'almost all,' therefore not all. For God's sake, if you wish to get anything from me, then try to recollect."

"In two or three days I could recollect; the best way will be to give me a horse, on which I can carry my holy wares."

"You will get it if you only tell me the truth."

At that moment the Czech, who was listening to the conversation, smiled and said:

"The truth will be known at the Mazowiecki court."

Sanderus looked at him for a while; then he said :

“Do you think that I am afraid of the Mazowiecki court?”

“I do not say you are afraid of the Mazowiecki court; but neither now, nor after three days will you go away with the horse. If it prove that you were lying, then you will not be able to go on your feet either, because my lord will order me to break them.”

“Be sure of that!” answered Zbyszko.

Sanderus now thought that it would be wiser to be more careful, and said :

“If I wanted to lie, I would have said immediately whether she was married or not; but I said: ‘I don’t remember.’ If you had common sense, you would recognize my virtue by that answer.”

“My common sense is not a brother of your virtue, because that is the sister of a dog.”

“My virtue does not bark, as your common sense does; and the one who barks when alive, may howl after death.”

“That is sure! Your virtue will not howl after your death; it will gnash its teeth, provided it does not lose its teeth in the service of the devil while living.” Thus they quarreled; the Czech’s tongue was ready, and for every word of the German, he answered two. Zbyszko having asked about the road to Lenczyca, ordered the retinue to move forward. Beyond Sieradz, they entered thick forests which covered the greater part of the country; but the highways through these forests, had been paved with logs and ditches dug along the sides, by the order of King Kazimierz. It is true that after his death, during the disturbances of the

war aroused by Nalenczs and Grzymalits, the roads were neglected; but during Jadwiga's reign, when peace was restored to the kingdom, shovels were again busy in the marshes, and axes in the forests; soon everywhere between the important cities, merchants could conduct their loaded wagons in safety. The only danger was from wild beasts and robbers; but against the beasts, they had lanterns for night, and crossbows for defence during the day; then there were fewer highway robbers than in other countries, and one who traveled with an armed retinue, need fear nothing.

Zbyszko was not afraid of robbers nor of armed knights; he did not even think about them. But he was filled with great anxiety, and longed with his whole soul to be at the Mazowiecki court. Would he find Danusia still a lady-in-waiting of the princess, or the wife of some Mazowiecki knight? Sometimes it seemed to him impossible that she should forget him; then sometimes he thought that perhaps Jurand went to the court from Spychow and married the girl to some neighbor or friend. Jurand had told him in Krakow, that he could not give Danusia to him; therefore it was evident that he had promised her to somebody else; evidently he was bound by an oath, and now he had fulfilled his promise. Zbyszko called Sanderus and questioned him again; but the German prevaricated more and more.

Therefore, Zbyszko was riding along, sad and unhappy. He did not think about Bogdanice, nor about Zgorzelice, but only how he should act. First, it was necessary to ascertain the truth at the Mazowiecki court; therefore, he rode hastily, only stopping for a short time at the houses of noblemen, in

the inns and in the cities to rest the horses. He had never ceased to love Danusia; but while in Bogdaniec and Zgorzelice, chatting almost every day with Jagienka and admiring her beauty, he had not thought about Danusia often. Now she was constantly in his thoughts, day and night. Even in his sleep, he saw her standing before him, with a lute in her hands and a garland on her head. She stretched her hands toward him, and Jurand drew her away. In the morning, when the dreams disappeared, a greater longing came, and he loved this girl more than ever now, when he was uncertain whether they had taken her from him or not.

Sometimes he feared that they had married her against her will; therefore, he was not angry with her, as she was only a child and could not have her own will. But he was angry with Jurand and with Princess Januszowna. He determined that he would not cease to serve her; even if he found her somebody else's wife, he would deposit the peacocks' crests at her feet.

Sometimes he was consoled by the thought of a great war. He felt that during the war, he would forget about everything and that he would escape all sorrows and griefs. The great war seemed suspended in the air. It was not known whence the news came, because there was peace between the king and the Order; nevertheless, wherever Zbyszko went, nothing else was talked about. The people had a presentiment that it would come, and some of them said openly: "Why were we united with Litwa, if not against those wolves, the Knights of the Cross? Therefore we must finish with them once for all, or they will destroy us." Others said: "Crazy monks! They are not satisfied with

Plowce! Death is over them, and still they have taken the land of Dobrzyn."

In all parts of the kingdom, they were making preparations, gravely, without boasting, as was customary for a fight for life or death; but with the silent, deadly grudge of a mighty nation, which had suffered wrongs for a long time, and finally was ready to administer a terrible punishment. In all the houses of the nobility, Zbyszko met people who were convinced that at any moment one might be obliged to mount his horse. Zbyszko was pleased to see these hasty preparations which he met at every step. Everywhere other cares gave way to thoughts about horses and armor. Everywhere the people were gravely inspecting spears, swords, axes, helmets and javelins. The blacksmiths were busy day and night, hammering iron sheets and making heavy armor, which could hardly be lifted by the refined western knights, but which the strong noblemen of Wielko and Malopolska could wear very easily. The old people were pulling out musty bags full of *grzywns*¹ from their chests, for the war expedition of their children. Once Zbyszko passed the night in the house of a wealthy nobleman, Bartosz of Bielaw, who having twenty-two sturdy sons, pledged his numerous estates to the monastery in Lowicz, to purchase twenty-two suits of armor, the same number of helmets and weapons of war. Zbyszko now realized that it would be necessary to go to Prussia, and he thanked God that he was so well provided.

Many thought that he was the son of a *wojowoda*; and when he told the people that he was a simple nobleman, and that armor such as he wore,

¹ Marks.

could be bought from the Germans by paying for it with a good blow of an axe, their hearts were filled with enthusiasm for war. Many a knight seeing that armor, and desiring to possess it, followed Zbyszko, and said: "Will you not fight for it?"

In Mazowsze, the people did not talk so much about the war. They also believed that it would come, but they did not know when. In Warszawa there was peace. The court was in Ciechanow, which Prince Janusz rebuilt after the Lithuanian invasion; nothing of the old town remained, only the castle.

In the city of Warszawa, Zbyszko was received by Jasko Socha, the *starosta*¹ of the castle, and the son of the *wojewoda* Abraham, who was killed at Worskla. Jasko knew Zbyszko, because he was with the princess in Krakow; therefore he received him hospitably and with joy; but the young man, before he began to eat or drink, asked Jasko about Danusia. But he did not know anything about her, because the prince and the princess had been in Ciechanow since fall. In Warszawa there were only a few archers and himself, to guard the castle. He had heard that there had been feasts and weddings in Ciechanow; but he did not know which girls were married.

"But I think," said he, "that Jurandowna is not married; it could not be done without Jurand, and I have not heard of his arrival. There are two brothers of the Order, *comthurs*, with the prince; one from Jansbork and the other from Szczytno, and also some foreign guests; on such occasions, Jurand never goes to the court, because the sight of a white mantle enrages him. If Ju-

¹ Here it means a commandant,

rand were not there, there would be no wedding ! If you wish, I will send a messenger to ascertain and tell him to return immediately ; but I firmly believe that you will find Jurandowna still a girl."

"I am going there to-morrow myself; but may God reward you for your kindness. As soon as the horses are rested, I will go, because I shall have no peace, until I know the truth."

But Socha was not satisfied with that, and inquired among the nobles and the soldiers if they had heard about Jurandowna's wedding. But nobody had heard anything, although there were several among them who had been in Ciechanow.

Meanwhile Zbyszko retired greatly relieved. While lying in bed he decided to get rid of Sanderus; but afterward he thought that the scoundrel might be useful to him because he could speak German. Sanderus had not told him a falsehood; and although he was a costly acquisition, because he ate and drank as much as four men would in the inns, still he was serviceable, and showed some attachment for the young knight. Then he possessed the art of writing, and that gave him a superiority over the shield-bearer, the Czech, and even over Zbyszko himself. Consequently Zbyszko permitted him to accompany his retinue to Ciechanow. Sanderus was glad of this, because he noticed that being in respectable company, he won confidence and found purchasers for his wares more easily. After stopping one night in Nasielsk, riding neither too swiftly nor too slowly, they perceived next day toward evening, the walls of the castle of Ciechanow. Zbyszko stopped in an inn to don his armor, so as to enter the castle according to knightly custom, with his helmet on his head and his spear in his

hand ; then he mounted his enormous stallion, and having made the sign of the cross in the air, he rushed forward. He had gone only a short distance, when the Czech who was riding behind him, drew near and said :

“ Your Grace, some knights are coming behind us ; they must be Krzyzaks.”

Zbyszko turned and saw about half a furlong behind him, a splendid retinue at the head of which there were riding two knights on fine Pomeranian horses, both in full armor, each of them wearing a white mantle with a black cross, and a helmet having a high crest of peacock's feathers.

“ For God's sake, Krzyzacy ! ” said Zbyszko.

Involuntarily he leaned forward in his saddle and aimed his spear ; seeing this the Czech seized his axe. The other attendants being experienced in war, were also ready, not for a fight, because the servants did not participate in single combat, but to measure the space for the fight on horseback, or to level the ground for the fight on foot. The Czech alone, being a nobleman, was ready to fight ; but he expected that Zbyszko would challenge before he attacked, and he was surprised to see the young knight aim his spear before the challenge.

But Zbyszko came to his senses in time. He remembered how he attacked Lichtenstein near Krakow, and all the misfortunes which followed ; therefore he raised the spear and handed it to the Czech. Without drawing his sword, he galloped toward the Krzyzaks. When he came near them, he noticed that there was a third knight, also with a peacock's crest on his helmet, and a fourth, without armor, but having long hair, who seemed to be a Mazur. Seeing them, he concluded that they

must be some envoys to the prince of Mazowiecki ; therefore he said aloud :

“ May Jesus Christ be praised ! ”

“ For ages and ages ! ” answered the long-haired knight.

“ May God speed you ! ”

“ And you also, sir ! ”

“ Glory be to St. George ! ”

“ He is our patron. You are welcome, sir. ”

Then they began to bow ; Zbyszko told his name, who he was, what his coat of arms was, what his war-cry was and whence he was going to the Mazowiecki court. The long-haired knight said that his name was Jendrek of Kropiwnica and that he was conducting some guests to the prince ; Brother Godfried, Brother Rotgier, also Sir Fulko de Lorche of Lotaringen, who being with the Knights of the Cross, wished to see the prince and especially the princess, the daughter of the famous “ Kiejstut. ”

While they were conversing, the foreign knights sat erect on their horses, occasionally bending their heads which were covered with iron helmets ornamented with peacocks’ tufts. Judging from Zbyszko’s splendid armor, they thought that the prince had sent some important personage, perhaps his own son, to meet them. Jendrek of Kropiwnica said further :

“ The *com’thor*, or as we would say the *starosta* from Jansbork is at our prince’s castle ; he told the prince about these knights ; that they desired to visit him, but that they did not dare, especially this knight from Lotaringen, who being from a far country, thought that the Saracens lived right beyond the frontier of the Knights of the Cross, and

that there was continual war with them. The prince immediately sent me to the boundary, to conduct them safely to his castle."

"Could they not come without your help!"

"Our nation is very angry with the Krzyzaks, because of their great treacherousness; a Krzyzak will hug and kiss you, but he is ready in the same moment to stab you with a knife from behind; and such conduct is odious to us Mazurs. Nevertheless anyone will receive even a German in his house, and will not wrong his guest; but he would stop him on the road. There are many who do this for vengeance, or for glory."

"Who among you is the most famous?"

"There is one whom all Germans fear to meet; his name is Jurand of Spychow."

The heart of the young knight throbbed when he heard that name; immediately he determined to question Jendrek of Kropiwnica.

"I know!" said he; "I heard about him; his daughter Danuta was girl-in-waiting with the princess; afterward she was married."

Having said this, he looked sharply into the eyes of the Mazowiecki knight, who answered with great astonishment:

"Who told you that? She is very young yet. It is true that it sometimes happens that very young girls are married, but Jurandowna is not married. I left Ciechanow six days ago and I saw her then with the princess. How could she marry during advent?"

Zbyszko having heard this, wanted to seize the knight by the neck and shout: "May God reward you for the news!" but he controlled himself, and said:

"I heard that Jurand gave her to some one."

"It was the princess who wished to give her, but she could not do it against Jurand's will. She wanted to give her to a knight in Krakow, who made a vow to the girl, and whom she loves."

"Does she love him?" exclaimed Zbyszko.

At this Jendrek looked sharply at him, smiled and said:

"Do you know, you are too inquisitive about that girl."

"I am asking about my friend to whom I am going."

One could hardly see Zbyszko's face under the helmet; but his nose and cheeks were so red that the Mazur, who was fond of joking, said:

"I am afraid that the cold makes your face red!"

Then the young man grew still more confused, and answered:

"It must be that."

They moved forward and rode silently for some time; but after a while Jendrek of Kropiwnica asked:

"What do they call you? I did not hear distinctly?"

"Zbyszko of Bogdaniec."

"For heaven's sake! The knight who made a vow to Jurandowna, had the same name."

"Do you think that I shall deny that I am he?" answered Zbyszko, proudly.

"There is no reason for doing so. Gracious Lord, then you are that Zbyszko whom the girl covered with her veil! After the retinue returned from Krakow, the women of the court talked about nothing else, and many of them cried while listen-

ing to the story. Then you are he! Hej! how happy they will be to see you at the court; even the princess is very fond of you."

"May the Lord bless her, and you also for the good news. I suffered greatly when I heard that Danusia was married."

"She is not married! Although she will inherit Spychow, and there are many handsome youths at the court, yet not one of them looks into her eyes, because all respect your vow; then the princess would not permit it. Hej! there will be great joy. Sometimes they teased the girl! Some one would tell her: 'Your knight will not come back!' Then she would reply: 'He will be back! He will be back!' Sometimes they told her that you had married another; then she cried."

These words made Zbyszko feel very tender; he also felt angry because Danusia had been vexed; therefore he said:

"I shall challenge those who said such things about me!"

Jendrek of Kropiwnica began to laugh and said:

"The women teased her! Will you challenge a woman? You cannot do anything with a sword against a distaff."

Zbyszko was pleased that he had met such a cheerful companion; he began to ask Jendrek about Danusia. He also inquired about the customs of the Mazowiecki court, about Prince Janusz, and about the princess. Finally he told what he had heard about the war during his journey, and how the people were making preparations for it, and were expecting it every day. He asked whether the people in the principalities of Mazowsze, thought it would soon come.

The heir of Kropiwnica did not think that the war was near. The people said that it could not be avoided; but he had heard the prince himself say to Mikolaj of Dlugolas, that the Knights of the Cross were very peaceable now, and if the king only insisted, they would restore the province of Dobrzyn to Poland; or they would try to delay the whole affair, until they were well prepared.

"The prince went to Malborg a short time ago," said he, "where during the absence of the grand master, the grand marshal received him and entertained him with great hospitality; now there are some *comthurs* here, and other guests are coming."

Here he stopped for a while, and then added:

"The people say that the Krzyzaks have a purpose in coming here and in going to Plock to the court of Prince Ziemowit. They would like to have the princes pledge themselves not to help the king but to aid them; or if they do not agree to help the Krzyzaks, that at least they will remain neutral; but the princes will not do that."

"God will not permit it. Would you stay home? Your princes belong to the kingdom of Poland!"

"No, we would not stay home," answered Jendrek of Kropiwnica.

Zbyszko again glanced at the foreign knights, and at their peacocks' tufts, and asked:

"Are these knights going for that purpose?"

"They are brothers of the Order and perhaps that is their motive. Who understands them?"

"And that third one?"

"He is going because he is inquisitive."

"He must be some famous knight."

"Bahl three heavily laden wagons follow him,

and he has nine men in his escort. I would like to fight with such a man!"

"Can you not do it?"

"Of course not! The prince commanded me to guard them. Not one hair shall fall from their heads until they reach Ciechanow."

"Suppose I challenge them? Perhaps they would desire to fight with me?"

"Then you would be obliged to fight with me first, because I will not permit you to fight with them while I live."

Zbyszko looked at the young nobleman in a friendly way, and said:

"You understand what knightly honor is. I shall not fight with you, because I am your friend; but in Ciechanow, God will help me to find some pretext for a challenge to the Germans."

"In Ciechanow you can do what you please. I am sure there will be tournaments; then you can fight, if the prince and the *comthurs* give permission."

"I have a board on which is written a challenge for anyone who will not affirm that *Panna Danuta Jurandowna* is the most virtuous and the most beautiful girl in the world; but everywhere the people shrugged their shoulders and laughed."

"Because it is a foreign custom; and speaking frankly, a stupid one which is not known in our country, except near the boundaries. That Lotaringer tried to pick a quarrel with some noblemen, asking them to praise some lady of his; but nobody could understand him, and I would not let them fight."

"What? He wanted to praise his lady? For God's sake!"

He looked closely at the foreign knight, and saw that his young face was full of sadness; he also perceived with astonishment that the knight had a rope made of hairs round his neck.

"Why does he wear that rope?" asked Zbyszko.

"I could not find out, because they do not understand our language; Brother Rotgier can say a few words, but not very well either. But I think that this young knight has made a vow to wear that rope until he has accomplished some knightly deed. During the day, he wears it outside of his armor, but during the night, on the bare flesh."

"Sanderus!" called Zbyszko, suddenly.

"At your service," answered the German, approaching.

"Ask this knight, who is the most virtuous and the most beautiful girl in the world."

Sanderus repeated the question in German.

"Ulryka von Elner!" answered Fulko de Lorche.

Then he raised his eyes and began to sigh. Zbyszko hearing this answer, was indignant, and reined in his stallion; but before he could reply, Jendrek of Kropiwnica, pushed his horse between him and the foreigner, and said:

"You shall not quarrel here!"

Zbyszko turned to Sanderus and said:

"Tell him that I say that he is in love with an owl."

"Noble knight, my master says that you are in love with an owl!" repeated Sanderus, like an echo.

At this Sir de Lorche dropped his reins, drew the iron gauntlet from his right hand and threw it in the snow in front of Zbyszko, who motioned to the Czech to lift it with the point of his spear.

Jendrek of Kropiwnica, turned toward Zbyszko with a threatening face, and said :

" You shall not fight ; I shall permit neither of you."

" I did not challenge him ; he challenged me."

" But you called his lady an owl. Enough of this ! I also know how to use a sword."

" But I do not wish to fight with you."

" You will be obliged to, because I have sworn to defend the other knight."

" Then what shall I do ? " asked Zbyszko.

" Wait ; we are near Ciechanow."

" But what will the German think ? "

" Your servant must explain to him that he cannot fight here ; that first you must receive the prince's permission, and he, the *comthur's*."

" Bah ! suppose they will not give permission."

" Then you will find each other. Enough of this talk."

Zbyszko, seeing that he could not do otherwise, because Jendrek of Kropiwnica would not permit them to fight, called Sanderus, and told him to explain to the Lotaringer knight, that they could fight only in Ciechanow. De Lorehe having listened, nodded to signify that he understood ; then having stretched his hand toward Zbyszko, he pressed the palm three times, which according to the knightly custom, meant that they must fight, no matter when or where. Then in an apparent good understanding, they moved on toward the castle of Ciechanow, whose towers one could see reflected on the pink sky.

It was daylight when they arrived ; but after they announced themselves at the gate, it was dark before the bridge was lowered. They were

received by Zbyszko's former acquaintance, Mikolaj of Dlugolas, who commanded the garrison consisting of a few knights and three hundred of the famous archers of Kurpie.¹ To his great sorrow, Zbyszko learned that the court was absent. The prince wishing to honor the *comthurs* of Szczytno and Jansbork, arranged for them a great hunting party in the Krupiecka wilderness; the princess, with her ladies-in-waiting went also, to give more importance to the occasion. Ofka, the widow of Krzych² of Jarzombkow, was key-keeper, and the only woman in the castle whom Zbyszko knew. She was very glad to see him. Since her return from Krakow, she had told everybody about his love for Danusia, and the incident about Lichtenstein. These stories made her very popular among the younger ladies and girls of the court; therefore she was fond of Zbyszko. She now tried to console the young man in his sorrow, caused by Danusia's absence.

"You will not recognize her," she said. "She is growing older, and is a little girl no longer; she loves you differently, also. You say your uncle is well? Why did he not come with you?"

"I will let my horses rest for a while and then I will go to Danusia. I will go during the night," answered Zbyszko.

"Do so, but take a guide from the castle, or you will be lost in the wilderness."

In fact after supper, which Mikolaj of Dlugolas ordered to be served to the guests, Zbyszko ex-

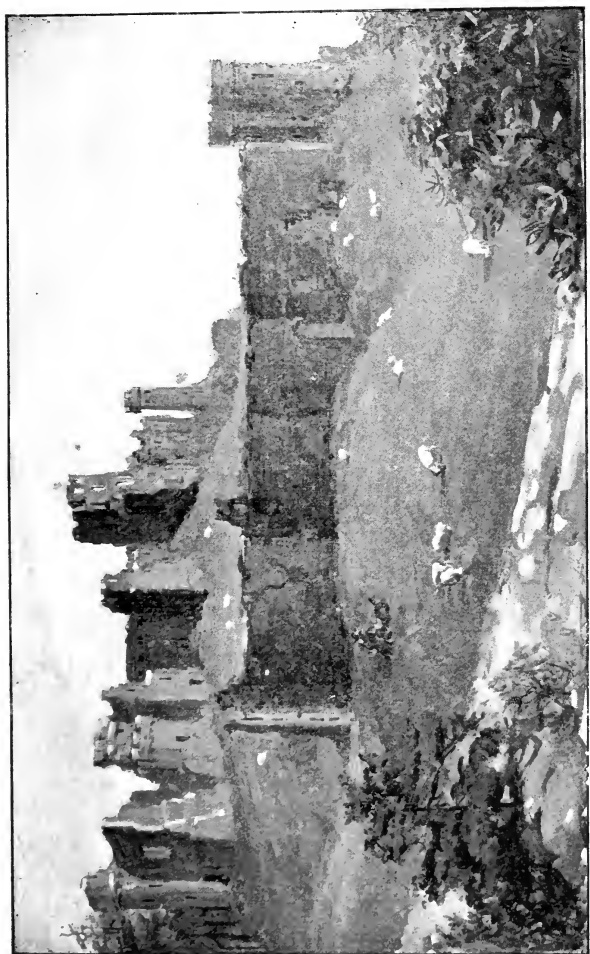
¹A part of Poland. The people were called Kurpie, on account of their shoes made of the bark of trees. They were all famous marksmen.

²Krystyn.

pressed his desire to go after the prince, and he asked for a guide. The brothers of the Order, wearied by the journey, approached the enormous fireplaces in which were burning the entire trunks of pine trees, and said that they would go the next day. But de Lorche expressed his desire to go with Zbyszko, saying that otherwise he might miss the hunting party, and he wished to see them very much. Then he approached Zbyszko, and having extended his hand, he again pressed his fingers three times.

CHAPTER IV.

MIKOLAJ of Dlugolas having learned from Jendrek of Kropiwnica about the challenge, required both Zbyszko and the other knight to give him their knightly word that they would not fight without the prince and the *comthur's* permission; if they refused, he said he would shut the gates and not permit them to leave the castle. Zbyszko wished to see Danusia as soon as possible, consequently he did not resist; de Lorche, although willing to fight when necessary, was not a blood-thirsty man, therefore he swore upon his knightly honor, to wait for the prince's consent. He did it willingly, because having heard so many songs about tournaments and being fond of pompous feasts, he preferred to fight in the presence of the court, the dignitaries and the ladies; he believed that such a victory would bring greater renown, and he would win the golden spurs more easily. Then he was also anxious to become acquainted with the country and the people, therefore he preferred a delay. Mikolaj of Dlugolas, who had been in captivity among the Germans a long time, and could speak the language easily, began to tell him marvelous tales about the prince's hunting parties for different kinds of beasts not known in the western countries. Therefore Zbyszko and he left the castle about midnight, and went toward Przasnysz, having with them their armed retinues, and men with lanterns to protect them against the wolves, which gathering during the winter in innumerable



packs, it was dangerous even for several well armed cavaliers to meet. On this side of Ciechanow there were deep forests, which a short distance beyond Przasnysz were merged into the enormous Kurpiecka wilderness, which on the west joined the impassable forest of Podlasie, and further on Lithuania. Through these forests the Lithuanian barbarians came to Mazowsze, and in 1337 reached Ciechanow, which they burned. De Lorche listened with the greatest interest to the stories, told him by the old guide, Macko of Turoboje. He desired to fight with the Lithuanians, whom as many other western knights did, he had thought were Saracens. In fact he had come on a crusade, wishing to gain fame and salvation. He thought that a war with the Mazurs, half heathenish people, would secure for him entire pardon. Therefore he could scarcely believe his own eyes, when having reached Mazowsze, he saw churches in the towns, crosses on the towers, priests, knights with holy signs on their armor and the people, very daring indeed, and ready for a fight, but Christian and not more rapacious than the Germans, among whom the young knight had traveled. Therefore, when he was told that these people had confessed Christ for centuries, he did not know what to think about the Knights of the Cross; and when he learned that Lithuania was baptized by the command of the late queen, his surprise and sorrow were boundless.

He began to inquire from Macko of Turoboje, if in the forest toward which they were riding, there were any dragons to whom the people were obliged to sacrifice young girls, and with whom one could fight. But Macko's answer greatly disappointed him.

"In the forest, there are many beasts, wolves, bisons and bears with which there is plenty of work," answered the Mazur. "Perhaps in the swamps there are some unclean spirits; but I never heard about dragons, and even if they were there, we would not give them girls, but we would destroy them. Bah! had there been any, the Kurpie would have worn belts of their skins long ago."

"What kind of people are they; is it possible to fight with them?" asked de Lorche.

"One can fight with them, but it is not desirable," answered Macko; "and then it is not proper for a knight, because they are peasants."

"The Swiss are peasants also. Do they confess Christ?"

"There are no such people in Mazowsze. They are our people. Did you see the archers in the castles? They are all the Kurpie, because there are no better archers than they are."

"They cannot be better than the Englishmen and the Scotch, whom I saw at the Burgundian court."

"I have seen them also in Malborg," interrupted the Mazur. "They are strong, but they cannot compare with the Kurpie, among whom a boy seven years old, will not be allowed to eat, until he has knocked the food with an arrow from the summit of a pine."

"About what are you talking?" suddenly asked Zbyszko, who had heard the word "Kurpie" several times.

"About the English and the Kurpiecki archers. This knight says that the English and the Scotch are the best."

"I saw them at Wilno. Owa! I heard their darts passing my ears. There were knights there

from all countries, and they announced that they would eat us up without salt; but after they tried once or twice, they lost their appetite."

Macko laughed and repeated Zbyszko's words to Sir de Lorche.

"I have heard about that at different courts," answered the Lotaringer; "they praised your knights' bravery, but they blamed them because they helped the heathen against the Knights of the Cross."

"We defended the nation which wished to be baptized, against invasion and wrong. The Germans wished to keep them in idolatry, so as to have a pretext for war."

"God shall judge them," answered de Lorche.

"Perhaps He will judge them soon," answered Macko of Turoboje.

But the Lotaringer having heard that Zbyszko had been at Wilno, began to question Macko, because the fame of the knightly combats fought there, had spread widely throughout the world. That duel, fought by four Polish and four French knights, especially excited the imagination of western warriors. The consequence was that de Lorche began to look at Zbyszko with more respect, as upon a man who had participated in such a famous battle; he also rejoiced that he was going to fight with such a knight.

Therefore they rode along apparently good friends, rendering each other small services during the time for refreshment on the journey and treating each other with wine. But when it appeared from the conversation between de Lorche and Macko of Turoboje, that Ulyka von Elner was not a young girl, but a married woman forty years old and having

six children, Zbyszko became indignant, because this foreigner dared not only to compare an old woman with Danusia, but even asked him to acknowledge her to be the first among women.

"Do you not think," said he to Macko, "that an evil spirit has turned his brain? Perhaps the devil is sitting in his head like a worm in a nut and is ready to jump on one of us during the night. We must be on our guard."

Macko of Turoboje began to look at the Lotaringer with a certain uneasiness and finally said:

"Sometimes it happens that there are hundreds of devils in a possessed man, and if they are crowded, they are glad to go in other people. The worst devil is the one sent by a woman."

Then he turned suddenly to the knight:

"May Jesus Christ be praised!"

"I praise him also," answered de Lorche, with some astonishment.

Macko was completely reassured.

"No, don't you see," said he, "if the devil were dwelling in him, he would have foamed immediately, or he would have been thrown to the earth, because I asked him suddenly. We can go."

In fact, they proceeded quietly. The distance between Ciechanow and Przasnysz is not great, and during the summer a cavalier riding a good horse can travel from one city to the other in two hours; but they were riding very slowly on account of the darkness and the drifts of snow. They started after midnight and did not arrive at the prince's hunting house, situated near the woods, beyond Przasnysz, until daybreak. The wooden mansion was large and the panes of the windows were made of glass balls. In front of the house were

the well-sweeps and two barns for horses, and round the mansion were many tents made of skins and booths hastily built of the branches of pine trees. The fires shone brightly in front of the tents, and round them were standing the huntsmen who were dressed in coats made of sheepskins, foxskins, wolfskins and bearskins, and having the hair turned outside. It seemed to Sir de Lorche that he saw some wild beasts standing on two legs, because the majority of these men had caps made of the heads of animals. Some of them were standing, leaning on their spears or crossbows; others were busy winding enormous nets made of ropes; others were turning large pieces of urus and elk meat which was hanging over the fire, evidently preparing for breakfast. Behind them were the trunks of enormous pines and more people; the great number of people astonished the Lotaringer who was not accustomed to see such large hunting parties.

"Your princes," said he, "go to a hunt as if to a war."

"To be sure," answered Macko of Turoboje; "they lack neither hunting implements nor people."

"What are we going to do?" interrupted Zbyszko; "they are still asleep in the mansion."

"Well, we must wait until they get up," answered Macko; "we cannot knock at the door and awaken the prince, our lord."

Having said this, he conducted them to a fire, near which the Kurpie threw some wolfskins and urusskins, and then offered them some roasted meat. Hearing a foreign speech, the people began to gather round to see the German. Soon the news was spread by Zbyszko's attendants that there was

a knight "from beyond the seas," and the crowd became so great that the lord of Turoboje was obliged to use his authority to shield the foreigner from their curiosity. De Lorche noticed some women in the crowd also dressed in skins, but very beautiful; he inquired whether they also participated in the hunt.

Macko explained to him that they did not take part in the hunting, but only came to satisfy their womanly curiosity, or to purchase the products of the towns and to sell the riches of the forest. The court of the prince was like a fireplace, round which were concentrated two elements—rural and civic. The Kurpie disliked to leave their wilderness, because they felt uneasy without the rustling of the trees above their heads; therefore the inhabitants of Przasnysz brought their famous beer, their flour ground in wind mills or water mills built on the river Wengierka, salt which was very rare in the wilderness, iron, leather and other fruits of human industry, taking in exchange skins, costly furs, dried mushrooms, nuts, herbs, good in case of sickness, or clods of amber which were plentiful among the Kurpie. Therefore round the prince's court there was the noise of a continual market, increased during the hunting parties, because duty and curiosity attracted the inhabitants from the depths of the forests.

De Lorche listened to Macko, looking with curiosity at the people, who, living in the healthy resinous air and eating much meat as was the custom with the majority of the peasants in those days, astonished the foreign travelers by their strength and size. Zbyszko was continually looking at the doors and windows of the mansion,

hardly able to remain quiet. There was light in one window only, evidently in the kitchen, because steam was coming out through the gaps between the panes.

In the small doors, situated in the side of the house, servants in the prince's livery appeared from time to time, hurrying to the wells for water. These men being asked if everybody was still sleeping, answered that the court, wearied by the previous day's hunting, was still resting, but that breakfast was being prepared. In fact through the window of the kitchen, there now issued the smell of roasted meat and saffron, spreading far among the fires. Finally the principal door was opened, showing the interior of a brightly lighted hall, and on the piazza appeared a man whom Zbyszko immediately recognized as one of the *rybals*, whom he had seen with the princess in Krakow. Having perceived him, and waiting neither for Macko of Turoboje, nor for de Lorche, Zbyszko rushed with such an impetus toward the mansion, that the astonished Lotaringer asked:

"What is the matter with the young knight?"

"There is nothing the matter with him," answered Macko of Turoboje; "he is in love with a girl of the princess' court and he wants to see her as soon as possible."

"Ah!" answered de Lorche, putting both of his hands on his heart. He began to sigh so deeply that Macko shrugged his shoulders and said to himself:

"Is it possible that he is sighing for that old woman? It may be that his senses are impaired!"

In the meanwhile he conducted de Lorche into the large hall of the mansion which was orna-

mented with the horns of bisons, elks and deer, and was lighted by the large logs burning in the fireplace. In the middle of the hall stood a table covered with *kilimek*¹ and dishes for breakfast; there were only a few courtiers present, with whom Zbyszko was talking. Macko of Turoboje introduced Sir de Lorche to them. More courtiers were coming at every moment; the majority of them were fine looking men, with broad shoulders and fallow hair; all were dressed for hunting. Those who were acquainted with Zbyszko and were familiar with his adventure in Krakow, greeted him as an old friend—it was evident that they liked him. One of them said to him:

“The princess is here and Jurandowna also; you will see her soon, my dear boy; then you will go with us to the hunting party.”

At this moment the two guests of the prince, the Knights of the Cross, entered: brother Hugo von Danveld, *starosta* of Ortelsburg,² and Zygfried von Löve, bailiff of Jansbork. The first was quite a young man, but stout, having a face like a beer drunkard, with thick, moist lips; the other was tall with stern but noble features. It seemed to Zbyszko that he had seen Danveld before at the court of Prince Witold and that Henryk, bishop of Plock, had thrown him from his horse during the combat in the lists. These reminiscences were disturbed by the entrance of Prince Janusz, whom the Knights of the Cross and the courtiers saluted. De Lorche, the *comthurs* and Zbyszko also ap-

¹ A woolen material, made by Polish peasants. In some provinces *kilimeks* are very artistic on account of the odd designs and the harmony of the colors.

² Szczytno in Polish.

proached him, and he welcomed them cordially but with dignity. Immediately the trumpets resounded, announcing that the prince was going to breakfast; they resounded three times; and the third time, a large door to the right was opened and Princess Anna appeared, accompanied by the beautiful blonde girl who had a lute hanging on her shoulder.

Zbyszko immediately stepped forward and kneeled on both knees in a position full of worship and admiration. Seeing this, those present began to whisper, because Zbyszko's action surprised the Mazurs and some of them were even scandalized. Some of the older ones said: "Surely he learned such customs from some knights living beyond the sea, or perhaps even from the heathen themselves, because there is no custom like it even among the Germans." But the younger ones said: "No wonder, she saved his life." But the princess and Jurandowna did not recognize Zbyszko at once, because he kneeled with his back toward the fire and his face was in the shadow. The princess thought that it was some courtier, who, having been guilty of some offence, besought her intervention with the prince; but Danusia having keener sight, advanced one step, and having bent her fair head, cried suddenly:

"Zbyszko!"

Then forgetting that the whole court and the foreign guests were looking at her, she sprang like a roe toward the young knight and encircling his neck with her arms, began to kiss his mouth and his cheeks, nestling to him and caressing him so long that the Mazurs laughed and the princess drew her back.

Then Zbyszko embraced the feet of the princess; she welcomed him, and asked about Macko, whether he was alive or not, and if alive whether he had accompanied Zbyszko. Finally when the servants brought in warm dishes, she said to Zbyszko :

“ Serve us, dear little knight, and perhaps not only now at the table, but forever.”

Danusia was blushing and confused, but was so beautiful, that not only Zbyszko but all the knights present were filled with pleasure; the *starosta* of Szczytno, put the palm of his hands to his thick, moist lips; de Lorche was amazed, and asked :

“ By Saint Jacob of Compostella, who is that girl? ”

To this the *starosta* of Szczytno, who was short, stood on his toes and whispered in the ear of the Lotaringer :

“ The devil’s daughter.”

De Lorche looked at him; then he frowned and began to say through his nose :

“ A knight who talks against beauty is not gallant.”

“ I wear golden spurs, and I am a monk,” answered Hugo von Danveld, proudly.

The Lotaringer dropped his head; but after awhile he said :

“ I am a relative of the princess of Brabant.”

“ *Pax! Pax!* ” answered the Knight of the Cross. “ Honor to the mighty knights and friends of the Order from whom, sir, you shall soon receive your golden spurs. I do not disparage the beauty of that girl; but listen, I will tell you who is her father.”

But he did not have time to tell him, because at that moment, Prince Janusz seated himself at the table; and having learned before from the bailiff of Jansbork about the mighty relatives of Sir de Lorche, he invited him to sit beside him. The princess and Danusia were seated opposite. Zbyszko stood as he did in Krakow, behind their chairs, to serve them. Danusia held her head as low as possible over the plate, because she was ashamed. Zbyszko looked with ecstasy at her little head and pink cheeks; and he felt his love, like a river, overflowing his whole breast. He could also feel her sweet kisses on his face, his eyes and his mouth. Formerly she used to kiss him as a sister kisses a brother, and he received the kisses as from a child. Now Danusia seemed to him older and more mature—in fact she had grown and blossomed. Love was so much talked about in her presence, that as a flower bud warmed by the sun, takes color and expands, so her eyes were opened to love; consequently there was a certain charm in her now, which formerly she lacked, and a strong intoxicating attraction beamed from her like the warm beams from the sun, or the fragrance from the rose.

Zbyszko felt it, but he could not explain it to himself. He even forgot that at the table one must serve. He did not see that the courtiers were laughing at him and Danusia. Neither did he notice Sir de Lorche's face, which expressed great astonishment, nor the covetous eyes of the *starosta* from Szczytno, who was gazing constantly at Danusia. He awakened only when the trumpets again sounded giving notice that it was time to go into

the wilderness, and when the princess Anna Danuta, turning toward him said :

" You will accompany us ; you will then have an opportunity to speak to Danusia about your love."

Having said this, she went out with Danusia to dress for the ride on horseback. Zbyszko rushed to the court-yard, where the horses covered with frost were standing. There was no longer a great crowd, because the men whose duty it was to hem in the beasts, had already gone forward into the wilderness with the nets. The fires were quenched ; the day was bright but cold. Soon the prince appeared and mounted his horse ; behind him was an attendant with a crossbow and a spear so long and heavy, that very few could handle it ; but the prince used it very easily, because like the other Mazovian Piasts, he was very strong. There were even women in that family so strong that they could roll iron axes,¹ between their fingers. The prince was also attended by two men, who were prepared to help him in any emergency ; they had been chosen from among the landowners of the provinces of Warszawa and Ciechanow ; they had shoulders like the trunks of oak trees. Sir de Lorche gazed at them with amazement.

In the meanwhile, the princess and Danusia came out ; both wore hoods made of the skins of white weasels. This worthy daughter of Kiejstut could *stitch* with a bow better than with a needle ; therefore her attendants carried a crossbow behind her. Zbyszko having kneeled on the snow, extended the palm of his hand, on which the princess rested her foot while mounting her horse ; then he

¹ Cymbaska who married Ernest Iron Habsburg.



“The retinue stretched in a long column, turned to the right from the mansion, and then began slowly to enter the forest.”



lifted Danusia into her saddle and they all started. The retinue stretched in a long column, turned to the right from the mansion, and then began slowly to enter the forest.

Then the princess turned to Zbyszko and said :

“ Why don't you talk ? Speak to her.”

Zbyszko, although thus encouraged, was still silent for a moment ; but, after quite a long silence, he said :

“ Danuska ! ”

“ What, Zbyszku ? ”

“ I love you ! ”

Here he again stopped, searching for words which he could not find ; although he kneeled before the girl like a foreign knight, and showed her his respect in every way, still he could not express his love in words. Therefore he said :

“ My love for you is so great that it stops my breathing.”

“ I also love you, Zbyszku ! ” said she, hastily.

“ Hej, my dearest ! hej, my sweet girl ! ” exclaimed Zbyszko. “ Hej ! ” Then he was silent, full of blissful emotion ; but the good-hearted and curious princess helped them again.

“ Tell her,” said she, “ how lonesome you were without her, and when we come to a thicket, you may kiss her ; that will be the best proof of your love.”

Therefore he began to tell how lonesome he was without her in Bogdaniec, while taking care of Macko and visiting among the neighbors. But the cunning fellow did not say a word about Jagienka. When the first thicket separated them from the courtiers and the guests, he bent toward her and kissed her.

During the winter there are no leaves on the hazel bushes, therefore Hugo von Danveld and Sir de Lorche saw him kiss the girl; some of the courtiers also saw him and they began to say among themselves:

"He kissed her in the presence of the princess! The lady will surely prepare the wedding for them soon."

"He is a daring boy, but Jurand's blood is warm also!"

"They are flint-stone and fire-steel, although the girl looks so quiet. Do not be afraid, there will be some sparks from them!"

Thus they talked and laughed; but the *starosta* of Szczytno turned his evil face toward Sir de Lorche and asked:

"Sir, would you like some Merlin to change you by his magic power into that knight?"¹

"Would you, sir?" asked de Lorche.

To this the Knight of the Cross, who evidently was filled with jealousy, drew the reins of his horse impatiently, and exclaimed:

"Upon my soul!"

But at that moment he recovered his composure, and having bent his head, he said:

"I am a monk and have made a vow of chastity."

He glanced quickly at the Lotaringer, fearing he would perceive a smile on his face, because in that respect the Order had a bad reputation among the people; and of all among the monks, Hugo von Danveld had the worst. A few years previous he had been vice-bailiff of Sambia. There were so

¹The knight Uter, being in love with the virtuous Igerna, wife of Prince Gorlas, with Merlin's help assumed the form of Gorlas, and with Igerna begot the king Arthur.

many complaints against him there that, notwithstanding the tolerance with which the Order looked upon similar cases in Marienburg, the grand master was obliged to remove him and appoint him *starosta* of the garrison in Szczytno. Afterward he was sent to the prince's court on some secret mission, and having perceived the beautiful Jurandowna, he conceived a violent passion for her, to which even Danusia's extreme youth was no check. But Danveld also knew to what family the girl belonged, and Jurand's name was united in his memory with a painful reminiscence.

De Lorche began to question him :

"Sir, you called that beautiful girl the devil's daughter; why did you call her that?"

Danveld began to relate the story of Zlotorja: how during the restoration of the castle, they captured the prince with the court, and how during that fight Jurandowna's mother died; how since that time Jurand avenged himself on all the Knights of the Cross. Danveld's hatred was apparent during the narration, because he also had some personal reasons for hating Jurand. Two years before, during an encounter, he met Jurand; but the mere sight of that dreadful "Boar of Spychow" so terrified him for the first time in his life that he deserted two of his relatives and his retinue, and fled to Szczytno. For this cowardly act the grand marshal of the Order brought a knightly suit against him; he swore that his horse had become unmanageable and had carried him away from the battlefield; but that incident shut his way to all higher positions in the Order. Of course Danveld did not say anything to Sir de Lorche about that occurrence, but instead he complained so bitterly about Jurand's

atrocities and the audacity of the whole Polish nation, that the Lotaringer could not comprehend all he was saying, and said :

" But we are in the country of the Mazurs and not of the Polaks."

" It is an independent principality but the same nation," answered the *starosta* ; " they feel the same hatred against the Order. May God permit the German swords to exterminate all this race ! "

" You are right, sir ; I never heard even among the heathen of such an unlawful deed, as the building of a castle on somebody else's land, as this prince tried to do," said de Lorche.

" He built the castle against us, but Zlotorja is situated on his land, not on ours."

" Then glory be to Christ that he granted you the victory ! What was the result of the war ? "

" There was no war then ? "

" What was the meaning of your victory at Zlotorja ? "

" God favored us ; the prince had no army with him, only his court and the women."

Here de Lorche looked at the Knight of the Cross with amazement.

" What ? During the time of peace you attacked the women and the prince, who was building a castle on his own land ? "

" For the glory of the Order and of Christendom."

" And that dreadful knight is seeking vengeance only for the death of his young wife, killed by you during the time of peace ? "

" Whosoever raises his hand against a Knight of the Cross, is a son of darkness."

Hearing this, Sir de Lorche became thoughtful ;

but he did not have time to answer Danveld, because they arrived at a large, snow-covered glade in the woods, on which the prince and his courtiers dismounted.

CHAPTER V

THE foresters under the direction of the head huntsman, placed the hunters in a long row at the edge of the forest, in such a way that being hidden themselves, they faced the glade. Nets were fastened along two sides of the glade, and behind these were the men whose duty it was to turn the beasts toward the hunters, or to kill them with spears if they became entangled in the nets. Many of the Kurpie were sent to drive every living thing from the depths of the forest into the glade. Behind the hunters there was another net stretched; if an animal passed the row of hunters, he would be entangled in it and easily killed.

The prince was standing in the middle in a small ravine, which extended through the entire width of the glade. The head huntsman, Mrokota of Mocarzew, had chosen that position for the prince because he knew that the largest beasts would pass through this ravine. The prince had a crossbow, and leaning on a tree beside him was a heavy spear; a little behind him stood two gigantic "defenders" with axes on their shoulders, and holding crossbows ready to be handed to the prince. The princess and Jurandowna did not dismount, because the prince would not allow them to do so, on account of the peril from urus and bisons; it was easier to escape the fury of these fierce beasts on horseback than on foot. De Lorche, although invited by the prince to take a position at his right hand, asked permission to remain with the ladies

for their defence. Zbyszko drove his spear into the snow, put his crossbow on his back and stood by Danusia's horse, whispering to her and sometimes kissing her. He became quiet only when Mrokota of Mocarzew, who in the forest scolded even the prince himself, ordered him to be silent.

In the meanwhile, far in the depths of the wilderness, the horns of the Kurpie were heard, and the noisy sound of a *krzywula*¹ answered from the glade; then perfect silence followed. From time to time the chatter of the squirrels was heard in the tops of the pines. The hunters looked at the snow-covered glade, where only the wind moved the bushes, and asked themselves what kind of animals would first appear. They expected abundant game, because the wilderness was swarming with urus, bisons and boars. The Kurpie had smoked out a few bears which were wandering in the thickets, angry, hungry and watchful.

But the hunters were obliged to wait a long time, because the men who were driving the animals toward the glade, had taken a very large space of the forest, and therefore they were so far away that the hunters did not even hear the baying of the dogs, that had been freed from the leashes immediately after the horns resounded.

After a while some wolves appeared on the edge of the forest, but having noticed the people, they again plunged into the forest, evidently searching for another pass. Then some boars having emerged from the wilderness, began to run in a long black line through the snowy space, looking from afar like domestic swine. They stopped and listened—turned and listened again: turned toward the nets,

¹ Kind of horn,

but having smelt the men, went in the direction of the hunters, snorting and approaching more and more carefully; finally there resounded the clatter of the iron cranks of the crossbows, the snarl of the bolts and then the first blood spotted the white snow.

Then a dreadful squealing resounded and the whole pack dispersed as if struck by a thunderbolt; some of them rushed blindly straight ahead, others ran toward the nets, while still others ran among the other animals, with which the glade was soon covered. The sounds of the horns were heard distinctly, mingled with the howling of the dogs and the bustle of the people coming from the depths of the forest. The wild beasts of the forest driven by the huntsmen soon filled the glade. It was impossible to see anything like it in foreign countries or even in the other Polish provinces; nowhere else was there such a wilderness as there was in Mazowsze. The Knights of the Cross, although they had visited Lithuania, where bisons attacked¹ and brought confusion to the army, were very much astonished at the great number of beasts, and Sir de Lorche was more astonished than they. He beheld in front of him herds of yellow deer and elks with heavy antlers, mingled together and running on the glade, blinded by fear and searching in vain for a safe passage. The princess, in whom Kiejstut's blood began to play, seeing this, shot arrow after arrow, shouting with joy when a deer or an elk which was struck, reared and then fell heavily plowing the snow with his feet. Some of the ladies-in-waiting were also shooting, because all were filled with enthusiasm for the sport. Zhyszko alone did not think about hunting; but having

¹ Wigand of Marburg mentions such cases.

leaned his elbows on Danusia's knees and his head on the palms of his hands, he looked into her eyes, and she smiling and blushing, tried to close his eyelids with her fingers, as if she could not stand such looks.

Sir de Lorche's attention was attracted by an enormous bear, gray on the back and shoulders, which jumped out unexpectedly from the thicket near the huntsmen. The prince shot at it with his crossbow, and then rushed forward with his boarspear; when the animal roaring frightfully, reared, he pierced it with his spear in the presence of the whole court so deftly and so quickly, that neither of the "defenders" needed to use his axe. The young Lotaringer doubted that few of the other lords, at whose courts he had visited during his travels, would dare to amuse themselves in such a way, and believed that the Order would have hard work to conquer such princes and such people. Later on he saw the other hunters pierce in the same way, many boars much larger and fiercer than any that could be found in the forest of Lower Lotaringen or in the German wilderness. Such expert hunters and those so sure of their strength, Sir de Lorche had never before seen; he concluded, being a man of some experience, that these people living in the boundless forests, had been accustomed from childhood to use the crossbow and the spear; consequently they were very dexterous in using them.

The glade of the wood was finally covered with the dead bodies of many different kinds of animals; but the hunt was not finished. In fact, the most interesting and also the most perilous moment was coming, because the huntsmen had met a herd

of urus and bisons. The bearded bulls marching in advance of the herd, holding their heads near the ground, often stopped, as if calculating where to attack. From their enormous lungs came a muffled bellowing, similar to the rolling of thunder, and perspiration steamed from their nostrils; while pawing the snow with their forefeet, they seemed to watch the enemy with their bloody eyes hidden beneath their manes. Then the huntsmen shouted, and their cries were followed by similar shoutings from all sides; the horns and fifes resounded; the wilderness reverberated from its remotest parts; meantime the dogs of the Kurpie rushed to the glade with tremendous noise. The appearance of the dogs enraged the females of the herd who were accompanied by their young. The herd which had been walking up to this moment, now scattered in a mad rush all over the glade. One of the bisons, an enormous old yellow bull, rushed toward the huntsmen standing at one side, then seeing horses in the bushes, stopped, and bellowing, began to plow the earth with his horns, as if inciting himself to fight.

Seeing this, the men began to shout still more, but among the hunters there were heard frightened voices exclaiming: "The princess! The princess! Save the princess!" Zbyszko seized his spear which had been driven into the ground behind him and rushed to the edge of the forest; he was followed by a few Litwins who were ready to die in defence of Kiejstut's daughter; but all at once the crossbow creaked in the hands of the lady, the bolt whistled and, having passed over the animal's head, struck him in his neck.



" Having seized his broad axe with both hands, he cut the bison's bent neck, near the horns.



"He is hit!" exclaimed the princess; "he will not escape."

But suddenly, with such a dreadful bellowing that the frightened horses reared, the bison rushed directly toward the lady; at the same moment with no less impetus, Sir de Lorche rushed from beneath the trees and leaning on his horse, with his spear extended as in a knightly tournament, attacked the animal.

Those near by perceived during one moment, the spear plunged into the animal's neck, immediately bend like a bow, and break into small pieces; then the enormous horned head disappeared entirely under the belly of Sir de Lorche's horse, and the charger and his rider were tossed into the air.

From the forest the huntsmen rushed to help the foreign knight. Zbyszko who cared most about the princess and Danusia's safety, arrived first and drove his spear under the bison's shoulder blade. He gave the blow with such force, that the spear by a sudden turn of the bison, broke in his hands, and he himself, fell with his face on the ground. "He is dead! He is dead!" cried the Mazurs who were rushing to help him. The bull's head covered Zbyszko and pressed him to the ground. The two powerful "defenders" of the prince arrived; but they were too late; fortunately the Czech Hlawa, given to Zbyszko by Jagienka, outstripped them, and having seized his broad-axe with both hands he cut the bison's bent neck, near the horns.

The blow was so powerful that the animal fell, as though struck by a thunderbolt, with his head almost severed from his neck; this enormous body fell on top of Zbyszko. Both "defenders" pulled

it away quickly. The princess and Danusia having dismounted, arrived at the side of the wounded youth.

Zbyszko, pale and covered with his own and the animal's blood, tried to rise; but he staggered, fell on his knees and leaning on his hands, could only pronounce one word:

"Danuska."

Then the blood gushed from his mouth. Danusia grasped him by his shoulders, but being unable to hold him, began to cry for help. The huntsmen rubbed him with snow and poured wine in his mouth; finally the head huntsman, Mrokota of Mocarzew ordered them to put him on a mantle and to stop the blood with soft spunk from the trees.

"He will live if his ribs and his backbone are not broken," said he, turning toward the princess. In the meanwhile some ladies of the court with the help of other huntsmen, were attending to Sir de Lorche. They turned him over, searching in his armor for holes or dents made by the horns of the bull; but besides traces of the snow, which had entered between the joints of the iron plates, they could find nothing. The urus had avenged himself especially on the horse, which was lying dead beside the knight; as for Sir de Lorche, he was not seriously injured. He had fainted and his right hand was sprained. When they took off his helmet and poured some wine in his mouth, he opened his eyes, and seeing the sorrowful faces of two pretty young ladies bent over him, said in German:

"I am sure I am in paradise already and the angels are over me."

The ladies did not understand what he said; but

being glad to see him open his eyes and speak, they smiled, and with the huntsmen's help raised him from the ground; feeling the pain in his right hand, he moaned and leaned with the left on the shoulder of one of the "angels"; for a while he stood motionless, fearing to make a step, because he felt weak. Then he glanced around and perceived the yellow body of the *urus*; he also saw Danusia wringing her hands and Zbyszko lying on a mantle.

"Is that the knight who rushed to help me?" he asked. "Is he alive?"

"He is very severely injured," answered a courtier who could speak German.

"From this time, I am going to fight not with him, but for him!" said the Lotaringer.

At this time, the prince who was near Zbyszko, approached Sir de Lorche and began to praise him because he had defended the princess and the other ladies, and perhaps saved their lives by his bold deed; for which, besides the knightly reward, he would be renowned not only then but in all future generations.

"In these effeminate times," said he, "there are few true knights traveling through the world; therefore pray be my guest as long as possible or if you can, remain forever in Mazowsze, where you have already won my favor, and by honest deeds will easily win the love of the people."

Sir de Lorche's heart was filled with joy when he heard the prince's words and realized that he had accomplished such a famous knightly deed and deserved such praise in these remote Polish lands, about which so many strange things were told in the East. He knew that a knight who could tell at the

Burgundian court or at the court of Brabant, that when on a hunting party, he had saved the life of the Mazowiecka princess, would be forever famous.

Zbyszko became conscious and smiled at Danusia; then he fainted again. The huntsmen seeing how his hands closed and his mouth remained open, said to one another that he would not live; but the more experienced Kurpie, among whom many an one had on him the traces of a bear's paws, a boar's tusks or an urus' horns, affirmed that the urus' horn had slipped between the knight's ribs, that perhaps one or two of his ribs were broken, but that the backbone was not, because if it were, he could not rise. They pointed out also, that Zbyszko had fallen in a snow-drift and that had saved him, because on account of the softness the animal when pressing him with his horns, could not entirely crush his chest, nor his backbone.

Unfortunately the prince's physician, the *ksiondz* Wysoniek of Dziewanna, was not with the hunting party, being busy in the chateau making wafers.¹ The Czech rushed to bring him immediately, and meanwhile the Kurpie carried Zbyszko to the prince's mansion. The Knight of the Cross, Hugo von Danveld, helped Danusia mount her horse and then, riding beside her and closely following the men who were carrying Zbyszko, said in Polish in a muffled voice, so that she alone could hear him :

¹There is a custom in Poland, Hungary, Bohemia and some other countries, to break wafers at receptions and parties, on Christmas eve and the following two days, expressing in the meantime good wishes for all manner of prosperity and happiness. The wafers are distributed by the parish, that is to say by the priest or sexton. The author refers to that custom.

"In Szczytno I have a marvelous balm, which I received from a hermit living in the Hercynski forest; I can bring it for you in three days."

"God will reward you," answered Danusia.

"God records every charitable deed; but will you reward me also?"

"What reward can I give you?"

The Krzyzak approached and evidently wished to say something else but hesitated; after a while he said:

"In the Order, besides the brothers there are also sisters. One of them will bring the healing balm, and then I will speak about the reward."

CHAPTER VI

THE *ksiondz* Wyszoniak dressed Zbyszko's wounds and he stated that only one rib was broken; but the first day he could not affirm that the sick man would live, because he could not ascertain whether the heart had been injured or not. Sir de Lorche was so ill toward morning that he was obliged to go to bed, and on the following day he could not move his hand nor his foot, without great pain in all the bones. The princess, Danusia and some other ladies of the court nursed the sick men and prepared for them, according to the prescriptions of the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak, different ointments and potions. But Zbyszko was very severely injured, and from time to time blood gushed from his mouth, and this alarmed the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak very much. He was conscious however, and on the second day, although very weak, having learned from Danusia to whom he owed his life, called Ilawa to thank and reward him. He remembered that he had received the Czech from Jagienka and that had it not been for her kind heart, he would have perished. He feared that he never would be able to repay the good-hearted girl for her kindness, but that he would only be the cause of her sorrow.

"I swore to my *panienka*," said Ilawa, "on my honor of a *wlodyka*, that I would protect you; therefore I will do it without any reward. You are indebted to her for your life."

Zbyszko did not answer, but began to breathe

heavily; the Czech was silent for a while, then he said:

"If you wish me to hasten to Bogdaniec, I will go. Perhaps you will be glad to see the old lord, because God only knows whether you will recover."

"What does the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek say?" asked Zbyszko.

"The *ksiondz* Wyszoniek says that he will know when the new moon comes. There are four days before the new moon."

"Hej! then you need not go to Bogdaniec, because I will either die, or I will be well before my uncle could come."

"Could you not send a letter to Bogdaniec? Sanderus will write one. Then they will know about you, and will engage a mass for you."

"Let me rest now, because I am very ill. If I die, you will return to Zgorzelice and tell how everything happened; then they can engage a mass. I suppose they will bury me here or in Ciechanow."

"I think they will bury you in Ciechanow or in Przasnysz, because only the Kurpie are buried in the forest, and the wolves howl over their graves. I heard that the prince intends to return with the court to Ciechanow in two days' time, and then to Warszawa."

"They would not leave me here alone," answered Zbyszko.

He guessed correctly, because that same day the princess asked the prince's permission to remain in the house in the wilderness, with Danusia and the ladies-in-waiting, and also with the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek, who was opposed to carrying Zbyszko to Przasnysz. Sir de Lorche at the end of two days

felt better, and he was able to leave his bed; but having learned that the ladies intended to remain, he stayed also, in order to accompany them on their journey and defend them in case the "Saracens" attacked them. Whence the "Saracens" could come, the Lotaringer did not know. It is true that the people in the East used thus to call the Litwins; but from them no danger could threaten Kiejstut's daughter, Witold's sister and the first cousin of the mighty "Krakowski king," Jagiello. But Sir de Lorche had been among the Knights of the Cross for so long a time, that notwithstanding all he had heard in Mazowsze about the baptism of the Litwa, and about the union of the two crowns on the head of one ruler, he could not believe that any one could expect any good from the Litwins. Thus the Knights of the Cross had made him believe, and he had not yet entirely lost all faith in their words.

In the meantime an incident occurred which cast a shadow between Prince Janusz and his guests. One day, before the departure of the court, Brother Godfried and Brother Rotgier, who had remained in Ciechanow, came accompanied by Sir de Fourey, who was a messenger of bad news to the Knights of the Cross. There were some foreign guests at the court of the Krzyzacki *starosta* in Lubowa; they were Sir de Fourey and also Herr von Bergow and Herr Meineger, both belonging to families which had rendered great services to the Order. They having heard many stories about Jurand of Spychow, determined to draw the famous warrior into an open field, and ascertain for themselves whether he really was as dreadful as represented. The *starosta* opposed the plan, giving as a rea-

son that there was peace between the Order and the Mazowiecki princes; but finally, perhaps hoping thus to get rid of his terrible neighbor, not only connived at the expedition but even furnished the armed *knechts*. The knights sent a challenge to Jurand, who immediately accepted it under the condition that they would send away the soldiers and that three of them would fight with him and two of his companions on the boundaries of Szlonsk and Spychow. But when they refused to send away the *knechts* or to retire from the land belonging to Spychow, he suddenly fell upon them, exterminated the *knechts*, pierced Herr Meineger dreadfully with a spear, took Herr von Bergow into captivity and put him into the Spychowski dungeon. De Fourcy alone escaped and after three days' wandering in the Mazowiecki forests, having learned from some pitch-burners that there were some brothers of the Order in Ciechanow, he succeeded in reaching them. He and the brothers of the Order made a complaint to the prince, and asked for the punishment of Jurand, and for an order for the deliverance of Herr von Bergow.

This news disturbed the good understanding between the prince and his guests, because not only the two newly arrived brothers but also Hugo von Danveld and Zygfried von Löve, began to beseech the prince to render justice to the Order, to free the boundaries from the plunderer and to punish him once for all his offences. Hugo von Danveld, having his own grievance against Jurand, the remembrance of which burned him with shame and grief, asked for vengeance almost threateningly.

"The complaint will go to the grand master," he said; "and if we be not able to get justice from

Your Grace, he will obtain it himself, even if the whole Mazowsze help that robber."

But the prince, although naturally good-tempered, became angry and said :

"What kind of justice do you ask for? If Jurand had attacked you first, then I would surely punish him. But your people were the first to commence hostilities. Your *starosta* gave the *knechts* permission to go on that expedition. Jurand only accepted the challenge and asked that the soldiers be sent away. Shall I punish him for that? You attacked that dreadful man, of whom everybody is afraid, and voluntarily brought calamity upon yourselves—what do you want then? Shall I order him not to defend himself, when it pleases you to attack him?"

"It was not the Order that attacked him, but its guests, foreign knights," answered Hugo.

"The Order is responsible for its guests, and then the *knechts* from the Lubowski garrison were there."

"Could the *starosta* allow his guests to be slaughtered?"

Here the prince turned to Zygfried and said :

"You must take heed lest your wiles offend God."

But the stern Zygfried answered :

"Herr von Bergow must be released from captivity, because the men of his family were high dignitaries in the Order and they rendered important services to the Cross."

"And Meineger's death must be avenged," added Hugo von Danveld.

Thereupon the prince arose and walked threateningly toward the Germans; but after a while,

evidently having remembered that they were his guests, he restrained his anger, put his hand on Zygfried's shoulder, and said :

"Listen : you wear a cross on your mantle, therefore answer according to your conscience—upon that cross ! Was Jurand right or was he not ? "

"Herr von Bergow must be released from prison," answered Zygfried von Löve.

There was a moment of silence ; then the prince said :

"God grant me patience ! "

Zygfried continued sharply, his words cutting like a sword :

"The wrong which was done to us in the persons of our guests, is only one more occasion for complaint. From the time the Order was founded, neither in Palestine, nor in Siedmiogrod,¹ nor among the heathenish Litwa, has any man wronged us so much as that robber from Spychow. Your Highness ! we ask for justice and vengeance not for one wrong, but for thousands ; not for the blood shed once, but for years of such deeds, for which fire from heaven ought to burn that nest of wickedness and cruelty. Whose moanings entreat God for vengeance ? Ours ! Whose tears ? Ours ! We have complained in vain. Justice has never been given us ! "

Having heard this, Prince Janusz began to nod his head and said :

"Hej ! formerly the Krzyzaks were received hospitably in Spychow, and Jurand was not your

¹Siebenkirchen in German, a province which now belongs to Hungary ; it was then an independent principality.

foe, until after his dear wife died on your rope; and how many times have you attacked him first, wishing to kill him, as in this last case, because he challenged and defeated your knights? How many times have you sent assassins after him, or shot at him with a crossbow from the forest? He attacked you, it is true, because vengeance burns within him; but have you not attacked peaceful people in Mazowsze? Have you not taken their herds, burned their houses and murdered the men, women and children? And when I complained to the grand master, he sent me this reply from Marienburg: 'Customary frolic of the boundaries.' Let me be in peace! Was it not you who captured me when I was without arms, during the time of peace, on my own land? Had it not been for your fear of the mighty Krakowski king, probably I would have had to moan until now in captivity. Who ought to complain? With such gratitude you repaid me, who belonged to the family of your benefactors. Let me be in peace; it is not you who have the right to talk about justice!"

Having heard this, the Knights of the Cross looked at each other impatiently, angry because the prince mentioned the occurrence at Złotorja, in the presence of Sir de Fourey; therefore Hugo von Danveld, wishing to finish the conversation about it, said:

"That was a mistake, Your Highness, and we made amends for it, not on account of fear of the Krakowski king, but for the sake of justice; and with regard to the frolics on the boundaries, the grand master cannot be held responsible, because on every frontier there are some restless spirits."

"Then you say this yourself, and still you ask

for the punishment of Jurand. What do you wish then?"

"Justice and punishment!"

The prince clenched his bony fists and repeated:

"God grant me patience!"

"Your Princely Majesty must also remember," said Danveld, further, "that our wantons only wrong lay people who do not belong to the German race, but your men raise their hand against the German Order, and for this reason they offend our Saviour Himself."

"Listen!" said the prince. "Do not talk about God; you cannot deceive Him!"

Then having placed his hands on the Krzyzak's shoulders, he shook him so strongly, that he frightened him. He relented immediately and said, mildly:

"If it be true that our guests attacked Jurand first and did not send away the soldiers, I will not blame him; but had Jurand really accepted the challenge?"

Having said this, he looked at Sir de Fourey, winking at him, to deny it; but the latter, not wishing to lie, answered:

"He asked us to send our soldiers away, and to fight three against three."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Upon my honor! Herr von Bergow and I agreed, but Meiniger did not consent."

Here the prince interrupted:

"*Starosta* from Szczytno! you know better than anybody else that Jurand would not miss a challenge."

Then he turned to all present and said:

"If one of you will challenge Jurand to a fight on horseback or on foot, I give my permission. If he be taken prisoner or killed, then Herr von Bergow will be released without paying any ransom. Do not ask me for anything else, because I will not grant it."

After these words, there was a profound silence. Hugo von Danveld, Zygfried von Löve, Brother Rotgier and Brother Godfried, although brave, knew the dreadful lord of Spychow too well to dare to challenge him for life or death. Only a foreigner from a far distant country, like de Lorche or de Fourcy, would do it; but de Lorche was not present during the conversation, and Sir de Fourcy was still too frightened.

"I have seen him once," he muttered, "and I do not wish to see him any more."

Zygfried von Löve said:

"It is forbidden the monks to fight in single combat, except by special permission from the grand master and the grand marshal; but I do not ask for permission for a combat, but for the release of von Bergow and the punishment by death of Jurand."

"You do not make the laws in this country."

"Our grand master will know how to administer justice."

"Your grand master has nothing to do with Mazowsze!"

"The emperor and the whole German nation will help him."

"The king of Poland will help me, and he is more powerful than the German emperor."

"Does Your Highness wish for a war with the Order?"

"If I wanted a war, I would not wait for you to

come to Mazowsze, but would go toward you ; you need not threaten me, because I am not afraid of you."

"What shall I say to the grand master?"

"He has not asked you anything. Tell him what you please."

"Then we will avenge ourselves."

Thereupon the prince stretched forth his arm and began to shake his finger close to the Krzyzak's face.

"Keep quiet!" said he, angrily; "keep quiet! I gave you permission to challenge Jurand; but if you dare to invade this country with the army of the Order, then I will attack you, and you will stay here not as a guest but as a prisoner."

Evidently his patience was entirely exhausted, because he threw a cap violently on the table and left the room, slamming the door. The Knights of the Cross became pale and Sir de Fourcy looked at them askance.

"What will happen now?" asked Brother Rotgier, who was the first to break the silence.

Hugo von Danveld turned to Sir de Fourcy and menacing him with his fists, said:

"Why did you tell him that you attacked Jurand?"

"Because it is true!"

"You should have lied."

"I came here to fight and not to lie."

"Well, you fought well, indeed!"

"And you! did you not run away from Jurand of Spychow?"

"*Pax!*" said von Löve. "This knight is a guest of the Order."

"It is immaterial what he said," added Brother

Godfried. "They would not punish Jurand without a trial, and in the court, the truth would come out."

"What will be done now?" repeated Brother Rotgier.

There was a moment of silence; then the sturdy and virulent Zygfried von Löve spoke:

"We must finish once for all with that bloody dog!" said he. "Herr von Bergow must be released from his fetters. We will gather the garrisons from Szczytno, Insburk and Lubowa; we will summon the Chelminsk nobility and attack Jurand. It is time to settle with him!"

"We cannot do it without permission from the grand master."

"If we succeed, the grandmaster will be pleased!" said Brother Godfried.

"But if we do not succeed? If the prince go against us?"

"He will not do that if there is peace between him and the Order."

"There is peace, but we are going to violate it. Our garrisons will not be sufficient to fight against the Mazurs."

"Then the grand master will help us and there will be a war."

Danveld frowned again and became thoughtful.

"No! no!" said he after a while. "If we be successful, the grand master will be pleased. Envoys will be sent to the prince, there will be negotiations and we will go scot-free. But in case of defeat, the Order will not intercede for us and will not declare war. Another grand master is necessary for that. The Polski king is behind the

prince, and the grand master will not quarrel with him."

"But we have taken the Dobrzynska province; it is evident that we are not afraid of Krakow."

"There was some pretext—Opolczyk. We took it apparently in pledge, and then——" Here he looked around and said quietly :

"I heard in Marienburg, that if they threaten us with war, we will return the province."

"Ah!" said Brother Rotgier, "if we had Markward Salzbach with us, or Shomberg who killed Witold's whelps, he would find some remedy against Jurand. Witold was the king's viceroy and a grand duke! Notwithstanding that, Shomberg was not punished. He killed Witold's children, and went scot-free! Verily, there is great lack among us of people who can find a remedy for everything."

Having heard this, Hugo von Danveld put his elbows on the table, leaned his head on his hands and plunged into deep thought. Then his eyes became bright, he wiped, according to his custom, his moist, thick lips with the upper part of his hand and said :

"May the moment in which you mentioned, pious brother, the name of the valiant Shomberg be blessed."

"Why? Have you found a remedy?" asked Zygfried von Löve.

"Speak quickly!" exclaimed Brother Godfried.

"Listen," said Hugo. "Jurand has a daughter here, his only child, whom he loves dearly."

"Yes, so he has. We know her. The princess Anna Danuta loves her also."

"Yes. Listen then: if you capture this girl,

Jurand will give as a ransom for her, not only Bergow, but all his prisoners, himself and Spychow ! ”

“ By Saint Bonifacius’ blood shed in Duchum ! ” exclaimed Brother Godfried ; “ it would be as you say ! ”

Then they were silent, as if frightened by the boldness and the difficulties of the enterprise. But after a while Brother Rotgier turned toward Zygfried von Löve, and said :

“ Your judgment and experience are equal to your bravery : what do you think about this plan ? ”

“ I think that the matter is worthy of consideration.”

“ Because,” said Rotgier further, “ the girl is a lady-in-waiting with the princess—the princess loves her as if she were her own daughter. Think, pious brother, what an uproar will arise.”

But Hugo von Danveld began to laugh :

“ You said yourself, that Shomberg poisoned or strangled Witold’s whelps, and what happened to him ? They will raise an uproar about anything we do ; but if we sent Jurand in chains to the grand master, then it is certain that we could expect reward rather than punishment.”

“ Yes,” said von Löve, “ there is a good opportunity for an attack. The prince is going away and Anna Danuta will remain here alone with her court. However it is a serious matter to invade the prince’s house during the time of peace. The prince’s house is not Spychow. It will be the same thing that happened in Zlotorja ! Again complaints against the Order will go to all kings and to the pope ; again that cursed Jagiello will

threaten us, and the grand master ; you know him : he is glad to take hold of anything he can, but he does not wish for war with Jagiello. Yes ! there will be a great uproar in all the provinces of Mazowsze and of Polska."

"In the meanwhile Jurand's bones will whiten on a hook," answered Brother Hugo. "Then we do not need to take his daughter from the prince's mansion."

"But we cannot do it from Ciechanow either, because there, besides the noblemen, there are three hundred archers."

"No. But Jurand can become ill and send for his daughter. Then the princess would not prevent her going, and if the girl be lost on the road, who will accuse you or me and say to us: 'You captured her!'"

"Bah!" answered von Löve, impatiently. "You must first make Jurand sick and then make him summon the girl."

At this Hugo smiled triumphantly and answered:

"I have a goldsmith, who having been driven from Marienburg for theft, settled in Szczytno and who is able to make a seal ; I also have people, who although our bondmen, came from the Mazurski country. Do you understand me yet?"

"I understand," shouted Brother Godfried.

And Rotgier raised his hands and said :

"May God bless you, pious brother, because neither Markward Salzbach, nor Shomberg could find better means."

Then he half closed his eyes, as if he saw something afar.

"I see Jurand," said he, "with a rope around his

neck, standing at the Gdansk gate in Marienburg and our *knechts* are kicking him."

"And the girl will become a servant of the Order," said Hugo.

Having heard this, von Löve turned his severe eyes on Danveld; but the latter again rubbed his lips with the upper part of his hand and said:

"And now to Szczytno as soon as we can!"

Before starting on the journey to Szczytno, the four brothers of the Order and de Fourcy went to bid the prince and the princess adieu. It was not a very friendly farewell; but the prince, not wishing to act contrary to the old Polish custom which did not permit the guests to depart with empty hands, made each brother a present of some beautiful marten-fur and of one *grzywna* of silver; they received the presents with great pleasure, assuring the prince that being brothers of an order, and having made a solemn promise to live in poverty, they would not retain the money for themselves, but would distribute it among the poor, whom they would recommend to pray for the prince's health, fame and future salvation.

The Mazurs laughed in their sleeves at such an assurance, because they knew very well how rapacious the Order was, and still better what liars the Knights of the Cross were.

It was a popular saying in Mazowsze: "As the skunk smells, so the Krzyzak lies." The prince waved his hand to such thanks, and after they went out he said that by the intervention of the Knights of the Cross, one would go to heaven as swiftly as the craw-fish walks.

But before that, while taking leave of the princess, at the moment that Zygfried von Löve kissed

her hand, Hugo von Danveld approached Danusia, put his hand on her head and caressing her, said :

"Our commandment is to return good for evil, and even to love our enemy ; therefore I will send a sister of the Order here, and she will bring you the healing balm."

"How can I thank you for it ?" answered Danusia.

"Be a friend of the Order and of the monks."

De Fourcy noticed this conversation, and in the meantime he was struck by the beauty of the young girl ; therefore as they traveled toward Szczytno, he asked :

"Who is that beautiful lady of the court with whom you were talking while taking leave of the princess ?"

"Jurand's daughter !" answered the Krzyzak.

Sir de Fourcy was surprised.

"The same whom you propose to capture ?"

"Yes. And when we capture her, Jurand is ours."

"Evidently everything is not bad that comes from Jurand. It will be worth while to guard such a prisoner."

"Do you think it will be easier to fight with her than with Jurand ?"

"I mean that I think the same as you do. The father is a foe of the Order ; but you spoke words as sweet as honey to the daughter, and besides you promised to send her the balm."

Evidently Hugo von Danveld felt the need of justification before Zygfried von Löve who, although not better than the others, observed the austere laws of the Order, and very often scolded the other brothers.

"I promised her the balm," said Hugo, "for that young knight, who was injured by the bison and to whom she is betrothed. If they make an outcry when the girl is captured, then we will tell them that we did not wish to harm her any, and the best proof of it will be that on account of Christian mercy we sent her some medicine."

"Very well," said von Löve. "Only we must send somebody whom we can trust."

"I will send a pious woman, entirely faithful to the Order. I will command her to look and to listen. When our people, apparently sent by Jurand, arrive, they will find the road already prepared."

"It will be difficult to get such people."

"No! In our province the people speak the same language. There are in our city, bah! even among the *knechts* of the garrison, some men who left Mazowsze because they were pursued by the law; it is true they are thieves and robbers; but they do not fear anybody and they are ready to do anything. To those men, I will promise, in case they succeed, a large reward; if they fail, a rope."

"Bah! Suppose they betray us?"

"They will not betray us, because in Mazowsze every one of them deserves to be hanged. Only we must give them decent clothes so that they will be taken for Jurand's servants; and we must get the principal thing: a letter with Jurand's seal."

"We must foresee everything," said Brother Rotgier. "It is probable that Jurand will go to see the prince, and justify himself on account of the last war. If he is in Ciechanow, he will go to see his daughter. It may happen that our men when they go to capture Jurandowna, will come in contact with Jurand himself."

"The men whom I am going to choose are sharp. They will know that they will be hanged if they come in contact with Jurand. It will be to their own interest not to meet him."

"But they may be captured."

"Then we will deny them and the letter. Who can prove that we sent them? And then if there be no outrage, there will be no outcry, and it will not harm the Order, if Mazury cut several scoundrels into pieces."

Brother Godfried, the youngest of the monks, said:

"I do not understand your policy, nor your fear that it may be known that the girl was carried off by our command. Because if we have her in our possession, we will be obliged to send some one to Jurand to tell him: 'Your daughter is with us; if you wish her to be set at liberty, give von Bergow and yourself in exchange for her.' You cannot do otherwise, and then it will be known that we ordered the girl to be carried off."

"That is true!" said Sir de Fourcy, who did not like the whole affair. "Why should we hide that which must come out?"

But Hugo von Danveld began to laugh, and turning to Brother Godfried, asked:

"How long have you worn the white mantle?"

"It will be six years the first week after the day of the Holy Trinity."

"When you have worn it six years longer, you will understand the affairs of the Order better. Jurand knows us better than you do. We will tell him: 'Your daughter is watched by Brother Shomberg; if you say a word, remember what happened to Witold's children!'"

"And then?"

"Then von Bergow will be free and the Order also will be free from Jurand."

"No!" exclaimed Brother Rotgier; "everything is planned so cleverly that God ought to bless our enterprise."

"God blesses all deeds whose purpose is the good of the Order," said the gloomy Zygfried von Löve.

Then they rode silently, and before them went their retinue, to open the way, because the road was covered with a heavy snow, which had fallen during the night. The day was cloudy, but warm; therefore the horses were steaming. From the forest flocks of crows were flying toward the villages, filling the air with their gloomy cawing.

Sir de Fourcy remained a little bit behind the Knights of the Cross and rode along in deep thought. He had been the guest of the Order for several years, and had participated in the expeditions against the Zmudz, where he distinguished himself by great bravery. Everywhere he had been received as the Knights of the Cross knew how to receive the knights from remote countries; he became attached to them very strongly, and not being rich, he planned to join their ranks. In the meanwhile he either lived in Marienburg, or visited the commanderies, searching in his travels for distractions and adventures. Having just arrived at Lubowa with the rich von Bergow, and having heard about Jurand, he desired very much to fight with the man who was regarded with general dread. The arrival of Meiniger, who was always victorious, precipitated the expedition. The *commander* of Lubowa furnished the men for it, but in

the meanwhile he told them so much not only about Jurand's cruelty, but also about his cunning and treachery, that when Jurand asked them to send away the soldiers, they refused to do it, fearing that if they did, he would surround and exterminate them or else capture and put them into the Spychowski dungeons. Then Jurand thinking that they cared less about a knightly fight than about plunder, attacked them and defeated them. De Fourcy saw von Bergow overthrown with his horse; he saw Meineger with a piece of a spear in his body, and he saw the men asking in vain for mercy. He escaped with great difficulty, and wandered for several days in the forests, where he would have died of hunger or been destroyed by wild beasts, if by chance he had not reached Ciechanow, where he found Brothers Godfried and Rotgier. From the expedition he emerged with a feeling of humiliation and shame, and with a desire for vengeance and a longing after Bergow, who was his dear friend. Therefore he joined with his whole soul in the complaint of the Knights of the Cross, when they asked for the punishment of the Polish knight and the freedom of his unhappy companion. When their complaint had no effect whatever, in the first moment he was ready to approve of any plan for vengeance against Jurand. But now some scruples were aroused in him. Listening to the conversation of the monks, and especially to what Hugo von Danveld said, he could not refrain from astonishment. It is true, that having become well acquainted during the past few years with the Knights of the Cross, he knew that they were not what they were represented to be in Germany and in the West. In Marienburg,

he knew, however, a few honest and upright knights who often complained of the corruption of the brothers, of their lasciviousness and lack of discipline; de Fourcy felt that they were right, but being himself dissolute and lacking in discipline, he did not criticise them for those faults, especially because all knights of the Order redeemed them with bravery. He had seen them at Wilno, fighting breast to breast with the Polish knights; at the taking of castles, defended with superhuman stubbornness by Polish garrisons; he had seen them perishing under the blows of axes and swords, in general assaults or in single combats. They were merciless and cruel toward the Litwa, but at the same time, they were as brave as lions.

But now it seemed to Sir de Fourcy, that Hugo von Danveld advised such actions from which every knight's soul should recoil; and the other brothers not only were not angry with him, but approved of his words. Therefore astonishment seized him more and more; finally he became deeply thoughtful, pondering whether it was proper to join in the performance of such deeds.

If it were only a question of carrying off the girl and then exchanging her for Bergow, he would perhaps consent to that, although his heart had been moved by Danusia's beauty. But evidently the Knights of the Cross wished for something else. Through her they wished to capture Jurand, and then murder him, and together with him,—in order to hide the fraud and the crime—must assuredly murder the girl also.

They had threatened her already with the same fate that Witold's children met, in case Jurand should dare to complain. "They do not intend to

keep any promise, but to cheat both and kill both," said de Fourey, to himself, "although they wear the cross, and ought to guard their honor more than anybody else."

He became more and more indignant at such effrontery, and he determined to verify his suspicions; therefore he rode near Danveld and asked:

"If Jurand give himself up to you, will you set the girl at liberty?"

"If we let her go free, the whole world would immediately say that we had captured both of them," answered Danveld.

"Then, what do you propose to do with her?"

At this Danveld bent toward the knight, and laughing, showed his rotten teeth from beneath his thick lips.

"Do you mean what will be done with her, before or after?"

But Fourey, surmising already that which he wished to know, became silent; for a while he seemed to struggle with himself; then he raised himself in his stirrups and said so loudly that he could be heard by all four of the monks:

"The pious brother, Ulrych von Jungingen, who is an example and an ornament of knighthood, said to me: 'Among the old knights in Marienburg, one can still find worthy Knights of the Cross; but those who control the commanderies near the frontier, only bring shame upon the Order.'"

"We are all sinful, but we serve the Saviour," answered Hugo.

"Where is your knightly honor? One cannot serve the Saviour by shameful deeds. You must know that I will not put my hand to anything like that, and that I also will prevent you."

"What will you prevent?"

"The artifice, the treachery, the shame!"

"How can you do it? In the fight with Jurand, you lost your retinue and wagons. You are obliged to live on the generosity of the Order, and you will die from hunger if we do not throw you a piece of bread; and then, you are alone, we are four—how could you prevent us?"

"How can I prevent you?" repeated de Fourcy.

"I can return to the mansion and warn the prince; I can divulge your plans to the whole world."

Here the brothers of the Order looked at one another, and their faces changed in the twinkling of an eye. Hugo von Danveld, especially, looked questioningly into Zygfried von Löve's eyes; then he turned to Sir de Fourcy:

"Your ancestors," said he, "used to serve in the Order, and you wished to join it also; but we do not receive traitors."

"And I do not wish to serve with traitors."

"Ej! you shall not fulfill your threat. The Order knows how to punish not only the monks——"

Sir de Fourcy being excited by these words, drew his sword, and seized the blade with his left hand; his right hand he put on the hilt and said:

"On this hilt which is in the form of the cross, on St. Denis, my patron's head, and on my knightly honor, I swear that I will warn the Mazowiecki prince and the grand master."

Hugo von Danveld again looked inquiringly at Zygfried von Löve, who closed his eyelids, as if consenting to something.

Then Danveld said in a strangely muffled and changed voice:



“ ‘No, but I kill,’ answered Danveld. And he thrust his knife into de Fourey’s side with such strength, that the blade disappeared up to the hilt.”



"St. Denis could carry his head after he was beheaded, but when yours once falls down——"

"Are you threatening me?" interrupted de Fourcy.

"No, but I kill!" answered Danveld. And he thrust his knife into de Fourcy's side with such strength, that the blade disappeared up to the hilt. De Fourcy screamed dreadfully; for a while he tried to seize his sword which he held in his left hand, with his right, but he dropped it; at the same time, the other three brothers began to pierce him mercilessly with their knives, in the neck, in the back, and in the stomach, until he fell from his horse.

Then there was silence. De Fourcy bleeding dreadfully from several wounds, quivered on the snow. From beneath the leaden sky, there came only the cawing of the crows, which were flying from the silent wilderness, toward human habitations.

Then there began a hurried conversation between the murderers:

"Our servants did not see anything!" said Danveld, panting.

"No. The retinues are in front; we cannot see them," answered von Löve.

"Listen: we will have cause for a new complaint. We will publish the statement that the Mazowiecki knights fell upon us and killed our companion. We will shout aloud—they will hear us in Marienburg—that the prince sent murderers even after his guests. Listen! we must say that Janusz did not wish to listen to our complaints against Jurand, but that he ordered the accuser to be murdered."

In the meanwhile, de Fourey turned in the last convulsion on his back and then remained motionless, with a bloody froth on his lips and with dread pictured in his widely-opened dead eyes. Brother Rotgier looked at him and said :

"Notice, pious brothers, how God punishes even the thought of treachery."

"What we have done, was done for the good of the Order," answered Godfried. "Glory to those——"

But he stopped, because at that moment, behind them, at the turn of the snowy road, there appeared a horseman, who rushed forward as fast as his horse could go. Having perceived him, Hugo von Danveld quickly exclaimed :

"Whoever this man is—he must die." And von Löve, who although the oldest among the brothers, had very keen eyesight, said :

"I recognize him; it is that shield-bearer who killed the bison with an axe. Yes; it is he!"

"Hide your knives, so that he may not become frightened," said Danveld. "I will attack him first, you shall follow me."

In the meanwhile, the Bohemian arrived and reined in his horse at a distance of eight or ten steps. He noticed the corpse lying in the pool of blood, the horse without a rider, and astonishment appeared on his face; but it lasted only for the twinkling of an eye. After a while, he turned to the brothers as if nothing had happened and said :

"I bow to you, brave knights!"

"We recognize you," answered Danveld, approaching slowly. "Have you anything for us?"

"The knight Zbyszko of Bogdaniec, after whom I carry the spear, sent me, because being injured by the bison, he could not come himself."

“What does your master wish from us?”

“My master commanded me to tell you that because you unrighteously accused Jurand of Spy-chow, to the detriment of his knightly honor, you did not act like honest knights, but howled like dogs; and if any one of you feels insulted by these words, he challenges him to a combat on horseback or on foot, to the last breath; he will be ready for the duel as soon as with God's help and mercy he is released from his present indisposition.”

“Tell your master, that the Knights of the Order bear insults patiently for the Saviour's sake, and they cannot fight, without special permission from the grand master or from the grand marshal; for which permission they will write to Malborg.”

The Czech again looked at de Fourcy's corpse, because he had been sent especially to that knight. Zbyszko knew that the monks could not fight in single combat; but having heard that there was a secular knight with them, he wanted to challenge him especially, thinking that by doing so he would win Jurand's favor. But that knight was lying slaughtered like an ox, by the four Knights of the Cross.

It is true that the Czech did not understand what had happened; but being accustomed from childhood to different kinds of danger, he suspected some treachery. He was also surprised to see Danveld, while talking with him, approach him closer and closer; the others began to ride to his sides, as if to surround him. Consequently he was upon the alert, especially as he did not have any weapons; he had not brought any, being in great haste.

In the meanwhile Danveld who was near him, said:

"I promised your master some healing balm; he repays me badly for my good deed. But no wonder, that is the usual thing among the Polaks. But as he is severely injured and may soon be called to God, tell him then——"

Here he leaned his left hand on the Czech's shoulder.

"Tell him then, that I—well—I answer this way!——"

And at the same moment, his knife gleamed near the throat of the shield-bearer; but before he could thrust, the Czech who had been watching his movements closely, seized Danveld's right hand, with his iron-like hands, bent and twisted it so that the bones cracked; then hearing a dreadful roaring of pain, he pricked his horse and rushed away like an arrow, before the others could stop him.

Brothers Rotgier and Godfried pursued him, but they soon returned, frightened by a dreadful cry from Danveld. Von Löve supported him with his shoulders, while he cried so loudly that the retinue, riding with the wagons in front at quite a distance, stopped their horses.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the brothers.

But von Löve ordered them to ride forward as fast as they could, and bring a wagon, because Danveld could not remain in his saddle. After a moment, a cold perspiration covered his forehead and he fainted.

When they brought the wagon, they put him on some straw in the bottom and hurried toward the frontier. Von Löve urged them forward because he realized that after what had happened, they could not lose time in nursing Danveld. Having

seated himself beside him in the wagon, he rubbed his face with snow from time to time ; but he could not resuscitate him. At last when near the frontier, Danveld opened his eyes and began to look around.

"How do you feel?" asked Löve.

"I do not feel any pain, but neither can I feel my hand," answered Danveld.

"Because it has grown stiff already ; that is why you do not feel any pain. It will come back in a warm room. In the meanwhile, thank God even for a moment of relief."

Rotgier and Godfried approached the wagon.

"What a misfortune!" said the first. "What shall we do now?"

"We will declare," said Danveld in a feeble voice, "that the shield-bearer murdered de Fourcy."

"It is their latest crime and the culprit is known!" added Rotgier.

CHAPTER VII

IN the meanwhile, the Czech rushed as fast as he could to the prince's hunting residence, and finding the prince still there, he told him first, what had happened. Happily there were some courtiers who had seen the shield-bearer go without any arms. One of them had even shouted after him, half in jest, to take some old iron, because otherwise the Germans would get the best of him ; but he, fearing that the knights would pass the frontier, jumped on horseback as he stood, in a sheepskin overcoat only and hurried after them. These testimonies dispelled all possible doubts from the prince's mind as to the fact who had murdered de Fourcy ; but they filled him with uneasiness and with such anger, that at first he wanted to pursue the Knights of the Cross, capture them and send them to the grand master in chains. After a while, however, he came to the conclusion, that it was impossible to reach them on this side of the boundary and he said :

"I will send, instead, a letter to the grand master, so that he may know what they are doing here. God will punish them for it !"

Then he became thoughtful and after a while he began to say to the courtiers :

"I cannot understand why they killed their guest ; I would suspect the shield-bearer if I did not know that he went there without weapons."

"Bah !" said the *ksiondz* Wyszonick, "why should the boy kill him ? He had not seen him be-

fore. Then suppose he had had arms, how could he attack five of them and their armed retinues?"

"That is true," said the prince. "That guest must have opposed them in something, or perhaps he did not wish to lie as was necessary for them. I saw them wink at him, to induce him to say that Jurand was the first to begin the fight."

Then Mrokota of Mocarzew said:

"He is a strong boy, if he could crush the arm of that dog Danveld."

"He said that he heard the bones of the German crack," answered the prince; "and taking into consideration what he did in the forest, one must admit it is true! The master and the servant are both strong boys. But for Zbyszko, the bison would have rushed against the horses. Both the Lotaringer and he contributed very much to the rescue of the princess."

"To be sure they are great boys," affirmed the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek. "Even now when he can hardly breathe, he has taken Jurand's part and challenged those knights. Jurand needs exactly such a son-in-law."

"In Krakow, Jurand said differently; but now, I think he will not oppose it," said the prince.

"The Lord Jesus will help," said the princess, who entered just now and heard the end of the conversation.

"Jurand cannot oppose it now, if only God will restore Zbyszko's health; but we must reward him also."

"The best reward for him will be Danusia, and I think he will get her, for when the women resolve to accomplish some object, then even Jurand himself could not prevent them."

"Am I not right, to wish for that marriage?" asked the princess.

"I would not say a word if Zbyszko were not constant; but I think there is no other in the world as faithful as he. And the girl also. She does not leave him now for a moment; she caresses him and he smiles at her, although he is very ill. I cry myself when I see this! I am speaking righteously! It is worth while to help such a love, because the Holy Mother looks gladly on human happiness."

"If it be God's will," said the prince, "the happiness will come. But it is true that he nearly lost his head for that girl and now the bison has injured him."

"Do not say it was for that girl," said the princess, quickly, "because in Krakow Danusia saved him."

"True! But for her sake he attacked Lichtenstein, in order to tear from his head the feathers, and he would not have risked his life for de Lorche. As for the reward, I said before that they both deserve one, and I will think about it in Ciechanow."

"Nothing will please Zbyszko more than to receive the knightly girdle and the golden spurs."

The prince smiled benevolently and answered:

"Let the girl carry them to him; and when the illness leaves him, then we will see that everything is accomplished according to the custom. Let her carry them to him immediately, because quick joy is the best!"

The princess having heard that, hugged her lord in the presence of the courtiers, and kissed his hands; he smiled continually and said:

"You see—A good idea! I see that the Holy Ghost has granted the woman some sense also! Now call the girl."

"Danuska! Danuska!" called the princess.

And in a moment in the side door Danusia appeared; her eyes were red on account of sleepless nights; and she held a pot of steaming gruel, which the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak had ordered to be put on Zbyszko's fractured bones.

"Come to me, my dear girl!" said Prince Janusz. "Put aside the pot and come."

When she approached with some timidity, because "the lord" always excited some fear in her, he embraced her kindly and began to caress her face, saying:

"Well, the poor child is unhappy—*hein?*"

"Yes!" answered Danusia.

And having sadness in her heart, she began to cry but very quietly, in order not to hurt the prince; he asked again:

"Why do you cry?"

"Because Zbyszko is ill," answered she, putting her little hands to her eyes.

"Do not be afraid, there is no danger for him. Is that not true, Father Wyszoniak?"

"Hej! by God's will, he is nearer to the wedding than to the coffin," answered the good-hearted *ksiondz* Wyszoniak.

The prince said:

"Wait! In the meanwhile, I will give you a medicine for him, and I trust it will relieve him or cure him entirely."

"Have the Krzyzaks sent the balm?" asked Danusia quickly, taking her little hands from her eyes.

"With that balm which the Krzyzaks will send, you had better smear a dog than a knight whom you love. I will give you something else."

Then he turned to the courtiers and said :

"Hurry and bring the spurs and the girdle."

After a while, when they had brought them to him, he said to Danusia :

"Take these to Zbyszko—and tell him that from this time he is a belted knight. If he die, then he will appear before God as *miles cinctus* ; if he live, then the rest will be accomplished in Ciechanow or in Warszawa."

Having heard this, Danusia seized "the lord" by his knees ; then caught the knightly insignia with one hand and the pot of porridge with the other, and rushed to the room where Zbyszko was lying. The princess, not wishing to lose the sight of their joy, followed her.

Zbyszko was very ill, but having perceived Danusia, he turned his pale face toward her and asked :

"Has the Czech returned ?"

"No matter about the Czech !" answered the girl. "I bring you better news than that. The lord has made you a knight and has sent you this by me."

Having said this, she put beside him the girdle and the spurs. Zbyszko's pale cheeks flushed with joy and astonishment, he glanced at Danusia and then at the spurs ; then he closed his eyes and began to repeat :

"How could he dub me a knight ?"

At that moment the princess entered, and he raised himself a little and began to thank her, because he guessed that her intervention had brought

such a great favor and bliss to him. But she ordered him to be quiet and helped Danusia to put his head on the pillows again. In the meanwhile, the prince, the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak, Mrokota and several other courtiers entered.

Prince Janusz waved his hand to signify that Zbyszko must not move; then having seated himself beside the bed, he said :

" You know ! The people must not wonder that there is reward for good deeds, because if virtue remained without any reward, human iniquities would walk without punishment. You did not spare your life, but with peril to yourself defended us from dreadful mourning ; therefore we permit you to don the knightly girdle, and from this moment to walk in glory and fame."

" Gracious lord," answered Zbyszko. " I would not spare even ten lives——"

But he could not say anything more, on account of his emotion ; and the princess put her hand on his mouth because the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak did not permit him to talk. The prince continued further :

" I think that you know the knightly duties and that you will wear the insignia with honor. You must serve our Saviour, and fight with the *starosta* of hell. You must be faithful to the anointed lord, avoid unrighteous war and defend innocence against oppression ; may God and His Holy Passion help you !"

" Amen !" answered the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak.

The prince arose, made the sign of the cross over Zbyszko and added :

" And when you recover, go immediately to Ciechanow, where I will summon Jurand."

CHAPTER VIII

THREE days afterward, a woman arrived with the Hercynski balm and with her came the captain of the archers from Szczytno, with a letter, signed by the brothers and sealed with Danveld's seal; in that letter the Knights of the Cross called on heaven and earth as witnesses of the wrongs committed against them in Mazowsze, and with a threat of God's vengeance, they asked for punishment for the murder of their "beloved comrade and guest." Danveld added to the letter his personal complaint, asking humbly but also threateningly for remuneration for his crippled hand and a sentence of death against the Czech. The prince tore the letter into pieces in the presence of the captain, threw it under his feet and said:

"The grand master sent those scoundrels of Krzyzaks to win me over, but they have incited me to wrath. Tell them from me that they killed their guest themselves and they wanted to murder the Czech. I will write to the grand master about that and I will request him to send different envoys, if he wishes me to be neutral in case of a war between the Order and the Krakowski king."

"Gracious lord," answered the captain, "must I carry such an answer to the mighty and pious brothers?"

"If it is not enough, tell them then, that I consider them dog-brothers and not honest knights."

This was the end of the audience. The captain

went away, because the prince departed the same day for Ciechanow. Only the "sister" remained with the balm, but the mistrustful *ksiondz* Wyszoniak did not wish to use it, especially as the sick man had slept well the preceding night and had awakened without any fever, although still very weak. After the prince's departure, the sister immediately sent a servant for a new medicine apparently—for the "egg of a basilisk"—which she affirmed had the power to restore strength even to people in agony; as for herself, she wandered about the mansion; she was humble and was dressed in a lay dress, but similar to that worn by members of the Order; she carried a rosary and a small pilgrim's gourd at her belt. She could not move one of her hands. As she could speak Polish well, she inquired from the servants about Zbyszko and Danusia, to whom she made a present of a rose of Jericho; on the second day during Zbyszko's slumber, while Danusia was sitting in the dining-room, she approached her and said:

"May God bless you, *panienko*. Last night after my prayers I dreamed that there were two knights walking during the fall of the snow; one of them came first and wrapped you in a white mantle, and the other said: 'I see only the snow, and she is not here,' and he returned."

Danusia who was sleepy, immediately opened her blue eyes curiously, and asked:

"What does it mean?"

"It means that the one who loves you the best, will get you."

"That is Zbyszko!" said the girl.

"I do not know, because I did not see his face; I only saw the white mantle and then I awakened;

the Lord Jesus sends me pain every night in my feet and I cannot move my hand."

"It is strange that the balm has not helped you any!"

"It cannot help me, *panienko*, because the pain is a punishment for a sin; if you wish to know what the sin was, I will tell you."

Danusia nodded her little head in sign that she wished to know; therefore the "sister" continued:

"There are also servants, women, in the Order, who, although they do not make any vows, and are allowed to marry, are obliged to perform certain duties for the Order, according to the brothers' commands. The one who meets such favor and honor, receives a pious kiss from a brother-knight as a sign that from that moment she is to serve the Order with words and deeds. Ah! *panienko*!—I was going to receive that great favor, but in sinful obduracy instead of receiving it with gratitude, I committed a great sin and was punished for it."

"What did you do?"

"Brother Danveld came to me and gave me the kiss of the Order; but I, thinking that he was doing it from pure license, raised my wicked hand against him——"

Here she began to strike her breast and repeated several times:

"God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

"What happened then?" asked Danusia.

"Immediately my hand became motionless, and from that moment I have been crippled. I was young and stupid—I did not know! But I was punished. If a woman fears that a brother of the Order wishes to do something wicked, she must

leave the judgment to God, but she must not resist herself, because whosoever contradicts the Order or a brother of the Order, that one will feel God's anger!"

Danusia listened to these words with fright and uneasiness; the sister began to sigh and to complain.

"I am not old yet," said she; "I am only thirty years old, but besides the hand, God has taken from me my youth and beauty."

"If it were not for the hand," said Danusia, "you need not complain."

Then there was silence. Suddenly the sister, as if she had just remembered something, said:

"I dreamed that some knight wrapped you with a white mantle on the snow. Perhaps it was a Krzyzak! They wear white mantles."

"I want neither Krzyzaks nor their mantles," answered the girl.

But further conversation was interrupted by the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek, who entering the room, nodded to Danusia and said:

"Praise God and come to Zbyszko! He has awakened and has asked for something to eat. He is much better."

In fact it was so. Zbyszko was a great deal better, and the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek was almost sure that he would recover, when an unexpected accident upset all his expectations. There came envoys from Jurand with a letter to the princess, containing dreadful news. In Spychow, half of Jurand's *grodek* had been burned, and he himself during the rescue was struck by a beam. It is true that the *ksiondz* Kaleb, who wrote the letter, said that Jurand would recover, but that the

sparks had burned his remaining eye so badly that there was very little sight left in it, and he was likely to become blind.

For that reason, Jurand asked his daughter to come to Spychow as soon as possible, because he wished to see her once more, before he was entirely encompassed by darkness. He also said that she was to remain with him, because even the blind, begging on the roads, had some one to lead them by the hand and show them the way; why should he be deprived of that pleasure and die among strangers? There were also humble thanks for the princess, who had taken care of the girl like a mother, and finally Jurand promised that, although blind, he would go to Warszawa once more, in order to fall at the lady's feet and beg her for further favor for Danusia.

The princess, when the *ksiądz* Wyszaniek had finished reading the letter, could not say a word for some time. She had hoped that when Jurand came to see his daughter and her, she would be able by the prince's and her own influence to obtain his consent for the wedding of the young couple. But this letter, not only destroyed her plans, but in the meanwhile deprived her of Danusia whom she loved as well as she did her own children. She feared that Jurand would marry the girl to some neighbor of his, so as to spend the rest of his life among his own people. It was no use to think about Zbyszko—he could not go to Spychow, and then who knew how he would be received there. The lady knew that Jurand had refused to give him Danusia; and he had said to the princess herself that on account of some secret reason, he would never consent to their marriage.

Therefore in great grief she ordered the principal messenger to be brought to her, as she desired to ask him about the Spychowski misfortune, and also to learn something about Jurand's plans.

She was very much surprised when a stranger came instead of the old Tolima, who used to bear the shield after Jurand and usually carried his messages; but the stranger told her that Tolima had been seriously injured in the last fight with the Germans and that he was dying in Spychow; Jurand being very ill himself, asked her to send his daughter immediately, because every day he saw less and less, and perhaps in a few days he would become blind. The messenger begged the princess to permit him to take the girl immediately after the horses were rested, but as it was already dusk she refused; especially as she did not wish to distress Zbyszko and Danusia by such a sudden separation.

Zbyszko already knew all about it, and he was lying like one stricken by a heavy blow; when the princess entered, and wringing her hands, said from the threshold:

"We cannot help it; he is her father!" he repeated after her like an echo: "We cannot help it——" then closed his eyes, like a man who expects death immediately.

But death did not come; but in his breast there gathered a still greater grief and through his head ran sad thoughts, like the clouds which driven by the wind, obstruct the sun and quench all joy in the world. Zbyszko understood as well as the princess did, that if Danusia were once in Spychow, she would be lost to him forever. Here everybody was his friend; there Jurand might even refuse to

receive him, or listen to him, especially if he were bound by a vow, or some other unknown reason as strong as a religious vow. Then how could he go to Spychow, when he was sick and hardly able to move in bed. A few days ago, when the prince rewarded him with the golden spurs, he had thought that his joy would conquer his illness, and he had prayed fervently to God to be permitted to soon rise and fight with the Krzyzaks; but now he had again lost all hope, because he felt that if Danusia were not at his bedside, then with her would go his desire for life and the strength to fight with death. What a pleasure and joy it had been to ask her several times a day: "Do you love me?" and to see how she covered her smiling and bashful eyes, or bent and answered: "Yes, Zbyszko."

But now only illness, loneliness and grief would remain, and the happiness would depart and not return.

Tears shone in Zbyszko's eyes and rolled slowly down on his cheeks; then he turned to the princess and said:

"Gracious lady, I fear that I shall never see Danusia again."

And the lady being sorrowful herself, answered:

"I would not be surprised if you died from grief; but the Lord Jesus is merciful."

After a while, however, wishing to comfort him, she added:

"But if Jurand die first, then the tutelage will be the prince's and mine, and we will give you the girl immediately."

"He will not die!" answered Zbyszko.

But at once, evidently some new thought came to

his mind, because he arose, sat on the bed and said in a changed voice :

“ Gracious lady——”

At that moment Danusia interrupted him ; she came crying and said from the threshold :

“ Zbyszk! Do you know about it already ! I pity *tatus*, but I pity you also, poor boy ! ”

When she approached, Zbyszko encircled his love with his well arm, and began to speak :

“ How can I live without you, my dearest ? I did not travel through rivers and forest, I did not make the vow to serve you, that I might lose you. Hej ! sorrow will not help, crying will not help, bah ! even death itself, because even if the grass grow over me, my soul will not forget you, even if I am in the presence of the Lord Jesus or of God the Father—I say, there must be a remedy ! I feel a terrible pain in my bones, but you must fall at the lady’s feet, I cannot—and ask her to have mercy upon us.”

Danusia hearing this, ran quickly to the princess’ feet, and having seized them in her arms, she hid her face in the folds of the heavy dress ; the lady turned her compassionate but also astonished eyes to Zbyszko, and said :

“ How can I show you mercy ? If I do not let the child go to her sick father, I will draw God’s anger on myself.”

Zbyszko who had been sitting on the bed, slipped down on the pillows and did not answer for a time because he was exhausted. Slowly, however, he began to move one hand toward the other on his breast until he joined them as in prayer.

“ Rest,” said the princess ; “ then you may tell

me what you wish ; and you, Danusia, arise and release my knees."

"Relax, but do not rise ; beg with me," said Zbyszko.

Then he began to speak in a feeble and broken voice :

"Gracious lady—Jurand was against me in Krakow—he will be here also, but if the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek married me to Danusia, then—afterward she may go to Spychow because there is no human power that could take her away from me——"

These words were so unexpected to the princess, that she jumped from the bench ; then she sat down again and as if she had not thoroughly understood about what he was talking, she said :

"For heaven's sake ! the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek."

"Gracious lady ! Gracious lady !" begged Zbyszko.

"Gracious lady !" repeated Danusia, embracing the princess' knees.

"How could it be done without her father's permission ?"

"God's law is the stronger !" answered Zbyszko.

"For heaven's sake !"

"Who is the father, if not the prince ? Who is the mother, if not you, gracious lady ?"

And Danusia added :

"Dearest *matuchna* !"¹

"It is true, that I have been and am still like a mother to her," said the princess, "and Jurand received his wife from my hand. It is true ! And if you are once married—everything is ended. Per-

¹Diminutive of mother ; it is a charming expression. The Polish language, like the Italian, has a great variety of diminutives.

haps Jurand will be angry, but he must be obedient to the commands of the prince, his lord. Then, no one need tell him immediately, only if he wanted to give the girl to another, or to make her a nun; and if he has made some vow, it will not be his fault that he cannot fulfill it. Nobody can act against God's will—perhaps it is God's will!"

"It cannot be otherwise!" exclaimed Zbyszko.

But the princess, still very much excited, said:

"Wait, I must collect my thoughts. If the prince were here, I would go to him immediately and would ask him: 'May I give Danusia to Zbyszko or not?' But I am afraid without him, and there is not much time to spare, because the girl must go to-morrow! Oh, sweet Jesus, let her go married—then there will be peace. But I cannot recover my senses again—and then I am afraid of something. And you Danusia, are you not afraid?—Speak!"

"I will die without that!" interrupted Zbyszko.

Danusia arose from the princess' knees; she was not only really on confidential terms with the good lady, but also much spoiled by her; therefore she seized her around the neck, and began to hug her.

But the princess said:

"I will not promise you anything without Father Wyszoniak. Run for him immediately!"

Danusia went after Father Wyszoniak; Zbyszko turned his pale face toward the princess, and said:

"What the Lord Jesus has destined for me will happen; but for this consolation, may God reward you, gracious lady."

"Do not bless me yet," answered the princess, "because we do not know what will happen. You

must swear to me upon you honor, that if you are married, you will not prevent the girl from going to her father, or else you will draw his curse upon her and yourself.

"Upon my honor!" said Zbyszko.

"Remember then! And the girl must not tell Jurand immediately. We will send for him from Ciechanow, and make him come with Danusia, and then I will tell him myself, or I will ask the prince to do it. When he sees that there is no remedy, he will consent. He did not dislike you?"

"No," said Zbyszko, "he did not dislike me; perhaps he will be pleased when Danusia is mine. If he made a vow, it will not be his fault that he could not keep it."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Danusia and the *ksiondz* Wyszomek. The princess immediately asked his advice and began to tell him with great enthusiasm about Zbyszko's plan; but as soon as he heard about it, he made the sign of the cross from astonishment and said:

"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost! How can I do it? It is advent!"

"For God's sake! That is true!" exclaimed the princess.

Then there was silence; only their sorrowful faces showed what a blow those words of the *ksiondz* Wyszomek were to all of them.

Then he said after a while:

"If you had a dispensation, then I would not oppose it, because I pity you. I would not ask for Jurand's permission, because our gracious lady consents and vouches for the prince's consent—well! they are the mother and the father for the

whole of Mazowsze. But without a bishop's dispensation, I cannot. Bah! if the *ksiondz* bishop of Kurdwanow were with us, he would not refuse a dispensation, although he is a severe priest, not like his predecessor, Bishop Mamphiolus, who used always to answer: *Bene! Bene!* "

"Bishop Jacob of Kurdwanow loves the prince and myself very much," said the lady.

"Therefore I say he would not refuse a dispensation, more so because there are some reasons for one: the girl must go to her father and that young man is ill and may die—Hm! *in articulo mortis!* But without a dispensation I cannot."

"I could obtain it afterward from Bishop Jacob; no matter how severe he may be, he will not refuse me this favor. I guarantee, he will not refuse," said the princess.

To this the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek who was a good and easy man, replied:

"A word of the Lord's anointed is a great word. I am afraid of the *ksiondz* bishop, but that great word! Then the youth could promise something to the cathedral in Plock. Well, as long as the dispensation will not come, there will be a sin—and nobody's but mine. Hm! It is true that the Lord Jesus is merciful and if any one sin not for his own benefit, but on account of mercy for human misery, he forgives more easily! But there will be a sin, and suppose the bishop should refuse, who will grant me pardon?"

"The bishop will not refuse!" exclaimed Princess Anna.

And Zbyszko said:

"That man Sanderus, who came with me, has pardons ready for everything."

The *ksiondz* Wyszoniak probably did not believe entirely in Sanderus' pardons; but he was glad to have even a pretext so that he could help Danusia and Zbyszko, because he loved the girl, whom he had known from childhood. Then he remembered that at the worst, he would be punished with church penitence, therefore turning toward the princess he said:

"It is true, I am a priest, but I am also the prince's servant. What do you command, gracious lady?"

"I do not wish to command but to beg," answered the lady. "If that Sanderus has pardons——"

"Sanderus has. But there is the question about the bishop. He is very severe with the canons in Plock."

"Do not be afraid of the bishop. I have heard that he has forbidden the priest to carry swords and crossbows and has forbidden different licenses, but he has not forbidden them to do good."

The *ksiondz* Wyszoniak raised his eyes and his hands, and said:

"Let it be according to your wish!"

At this word, joy filled their hearts. Zbyszko again sat on the bed and the princess, Danusia and Father Wyszoniak sat round it and began to plan how they should act.

They decided to keep it secret so that not a soul in the house should know anything about it; they also decided that Jurand must not know until the princess herself told him in Ciechanow about everything.

In the meanwhile, the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak was to write a letter from the princess to Jurand and ask

him to come to Ciechanow, where he could find better medicine and where he will not weary. Finally, they decided, that Zbyszko and Danusia will go to confession, that the wedding ceremony will be performed during the night, when everybody will retire.

The thought came to Zbyszko to have his shield-bearer, the Czech, as a witness of the wedding ; but he gave up the idea when he remembered that he had received him from Jagienka. For a moment she stood in his memory as though present, so that it seemed to him that he saw her blushing face and her eyes full of tears, and heard her pleading voice say : " Do not do that ! Do not repay me with evil for good, nor with misery for love ! " Then at once great compassion for her seized him, because he felt that a great wrong would be done her, after which she would find no consolation under the roof of Zgorzelice, nor in the depths of the forest, nor in the fields, nor in the abbot's gifts, nor in Cztan and Wilk's courtship. Therefore he said inwardly : " Girl, may God give you the best of everything ; for although I am willing to bend the sky for you, I cannot. " In fact, the thought that he could not help it, immediately brought him relief, and tranquillity returned, so that immediately he began to think only about Danusia and the wedding.

But he was obliged to call the Czech to help him ; therefore although he determined not to say a word to him about what was going to happen, he summoned him and said :

" To-day I am going to confession as well as to the Lord's table ; therefore you must dress me in my best clothing as if I were going to the king's palace. "

The Czech was a little afraid and began to look into his face ; Zbyszko having noticed this, said :

“ Do not be alarmed, people do not go to confession only when they expect to die ; the holy days are coming, Father Wyszoniek and the princess are going to Ciechanow, and then there will be no priest nearer than in Przasnysz.”

“ And are you not going ? ” asked the shield-bearer.

“ If I recover my health, then I will go ; but that is in God's hands.”

Therefore the Czech was quieted ; he hurried to the chests, and brought that white *jaka* embroidered with gold, in which the knight used to dress for great occasions, and also a beautiful rug to cover the bed ; then having lifted Zbyszko, with the help of the two Turks, he washed him, and combed his long hair on which he put a scarlet zone ; finally he placed him on red cushions, and satisfied with his own work, said :

“ If Your Grace were able to dance, you could celebrate even a wedding ! ”

“ It will be necessary to celebrate it without dancing,” answered Zbyszko, smiling.

In the meanwhile the princess was also thinking how to dress Danusia, because for her womanly nature it was a question of great importance, and under no consideration would she consent to have her beloved foster child married in her everyday dress. The servants who were also told that the girl must dress in the color of innocence for confession, very easily found a white dress, but there was great trouble about the wreath for the head. While thinking of it, the lady became so sad that she began to complain :

"My poor orphan, where shall I find a wreath of rue for you in this wilderness? There is none here, neither a flower, nor a leaf; only some green moss under the snow."

And Danusia, standing with loosened hair, also became sorrowful, because she wanted a wreath; after awhile, however, she pointed to the garlands of immortelles, hanging on the walls of the room, and said:

"We must weave a wreath of those flowers, because we will not find anything else, and Zbyszko will take me even with such a wreath."

The princess would not consent at first, being afraid of a bad omen; but as in this mansion, to which they came only for hunting, there were no flowers, finally the immortelles were taken. In the meanwhile, Father Wyszoniak came, and received Zbyszko's confession; afterwards he listened to the girl's confession and then the gloomy night fell. The servants retired after supper, according to the princess' order. Some of Jurand's men lay down in the servants' room, and others slept in the stables with the horses. Soon the fires in the servants' room became covered with ashes and were quenched; finally everything became absolutely quiet in the forest house, only from time to time the dogs were heard howling at the wolves in the direction of the wilderness.

But in the princess', Father Wyszoniak's and Zbyszko's rooms, the windows were shining, throwing red lights on the snow which covered the court-yard. They were waiting in silence, listening to the throbbing of their own hearts—uneasy and affected by the solemnity of the moment which was coming. In fact, after midnight, the princess took

Danusia by the hand and conducted her to Zbyszko's room, where Father Wyszoniak was waiting for them. In the room there was a great blaze in the fireplace, and by its abundant but unsteady light, Zbyszko perceived Danusia; she looked a little pale on account of sleepless nights; she was dressed in a long, stiff, white dress, with a wreath of immortelles on her brow. On account of emotion, she closed her eyes; her little hands were hanging against the dress, and thus she appeared like some painting on a church window; there was something spiritual about her; Zbyszko was surprised when he saw her, and thought that he was going to marry not an earthly, but a heavenly being. He still thought this when she kneeled with crossed hands to receive the communion, and having bent her head, closed her eyes entirely. In that moment she even seemed to him as if dead, and fear seized his heart. But it did not last long because, having heard the priest's voice repeat: "*Ecce Agnus Dei*," his thoughts went toward God. In the room there were heard only the solemn voice of Father Wyszoniak: "*Domine, non sum dignus*," and with it the crackling of the logs in the fireplace and the sound of crickets playing obstinately, but sadly, in the chinks of the chimney. Outdoors the wind arose and rustled in the snowy forest, but soon stopped.

Zbyszko and Danusia remained sometime in silence; the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak took the chalice and carried it to the chapel of the mansion. After a while he returned accompanied by Sir de Lorche, and seeing astonishment on the faces of those present, he placed his finger on his mouth, as if to stop the cry of surprise, then he said:

"I understand; it will be better to have two

witnesses of the marriage; I warned this knight who swore to me on his honor and on the relics of Aguisgranum to keep the secret as long as necessary."

Then Sir de Lorche first kneeled before the princess, then before Danusia; then he arose and stood silently, clad in his armor, on which the red light of the fire was playing. He stood motionless, as if plunged in ecstasy, because for him also, that white girl with a wreath of immortelles on her brow seemed like the picture of an angel, seen on the window of a Gothic cathedral.

The priest put her near Zbyszko's bed and having put the stole round their hands, began the customary rite. On the princess' honest face the tears were dropping one after another; but she was not uneasy within, because she believed she was doing well, uniting these two lovely and innocent children. Sir de Lorche kneeled again, and leaning with both hands on the hilt of his sword, looked like a knight who beholds a vision. The young people repeated the priest's words: "I . . . take you . . ." and those sweet quiet words were accompanied again by the singing of the crickets in the chimney and the crackling in the fireplace. When the ceremony was finished, Danusia fell at the feet of the princess who blessed them both, and finally intrusted them to the tutelage of heavenly might; she said to Zbyszko:

"Now be merry, because she is yours, and you are hers."

Then Zbyszko extended his well arm to Danusia, and she put her little arms round his neck; for a while one could hear them repeat to each other:

"Danuska, you are mine!"

"Zbyszku, you are mine!"

But soon Zbyszko became weak, because there were too many emotions for his strength, and having slipped on the pillow, he began to breathe heavily. But he did not faint, nor did he cease to smile at Danusia, who was wiping his face which was covered with a cold perspiration, and he did not stop repeating :

"Danuska, you are mine!" to which every time she nodded her fair head in assent.

This sight greatly moved Sir de Lorche, who declared that in no other country had he seen such loving and tender hearts; therefore he solemnly swore that he was ready to fight on foot or on horseback with any knight, magician or dragon, who would try to prevent their happiness. The princess and Father Wyszoniek were witnesses of his oath.

But the lady, being unable to conceive of a marriage without some merriment, brought some wine which they drank. The hours of night were passing on. Zbyszko having overcome his weakness, drew Danusia to him and said :

"Since the Lord Jesus has given you to me, nobody can take you from me; but I am sorry that you must leave me, my sweetest berry."

"We will come with *tatulo* to Ciechanow," answered Danusia.

"If only you do not become sick—or—God may preserve you from some bad accident.—You must go to Spychow—I know! Hej! I must be thankful to God and to our gracious lady, that you are already mine—because we are married and no human force can break our marriage."

But as this marriage was performed secretly

during the night and separation was necessary immediately afterward, therefore from time to time, not only Zbyszko, but everybody was filled with sadness. The conversation was broken. From time to time, also the fire was quenched and plunged all heads in obscurity. Then the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak threw fresh logs on the charcoal and when something whined in the wood, as happens very often when the wood is fresh, he said:

"Penitent soul, what do you wish?"

The crickets answered him and the increasing flames which brought out from the shadow the sleepless faces, were reflected in Sir de Lorche's armor, lighting in the meanwhile Danusia's white dress and the immortelles on her head.

The dogs outside again began to howl in the direction of the forest, as they usually do, when they scent wolves.

As the hours of the night flew on, oftener there was silence; finally the princess said:

"Sweet Jesus! We had better go to bed if we are going to sit like this after a wedding, but as it was determined to watch until morning, then play for us, my little flower, for the last time before your departure, on the little lute—for me and for Zbyszko."

"What shall I play?" asked she.

"What?" said the princess. "What else if not the same song which you sang in Tyniec, when Zbyszko saw you for the first time."

"Hej! I remember—and shall never forget it," said Zbyszko. "When I heard that song somewhere else—I cried."

"Then I will sing it!" said Danusia.

And immediately she began to thrum on the lute; then, having raised her little head, she sang :

“If I only could get
The wings like a birdie,
I would fly quickly
To my dearest Jasiek!
I would then be seated
On the high enclosure;
Look, my dear Jasiulku,
Look on me, poor orphan.”

But at once her voice broke, her mouth began to tremble and from beneath the closed eyelids the tears began to flow down her cheeks. For a moment she tried not to let them pass the eyelashes, but she could not keep them back and finally she began to cry, exactly as she did the last time she sang that song to Zbyszko in the prison in Krakow.

“Danuska! what is the matter, Danuska?” asked Zbyszko.

“Why are you crying? Such a wedding!” exclaimed the princess. “Why?”

“I do not know,” answered Danusia, sobbing. “I am so sad! I regret Zbyszko and you so much.”

Then all became very sorrowful; they began to console her, and to explain to her that she was not going to remain in Spychow a long time, but that they would surely be with Jurand in Ciechanow for the holy days. Zbyszko again encircled her with his arm, drew her to his breast and kissed the tears from her eyes; but the oppression remained in all hearts, and thus the hours of night passed.

Finally from the court-yard there resounded such a sudden and dreadful noise, that all shivered. The princess, having rushed from the bench, exclaimed :

"For God's sake. The sweeps of the wells!
They are watering the horses!"

And the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak looked through the window, in which the glass balls were growing gray and said:

"The night grows white and the day is coming.
Ave Maria, gratia plena——"

Then he left the room but having returned after a while, he said:

"The day breaks, but the day will be dark.
Jurand's people are watering their horses. Poor girl, you must be ready!"

The princess and Danusia began to cry very loudly and both, together with Zbyszko, began to lament, as simple people do when they have to separate; it was half lamenting and half singing, which flowed from full souls, in a natural way, as the tears flow from the eyes.

"Hej! there is no use of lamenting,
We must separate, my darling,
Farewell — hej!"

Zbyszko nestled Danusia for the last time on his breast and kept her for a long time, as long as he could breathe and until the princess drew her from him, in order to dress her for the journey.

In the meanwhile it was broad daylight.

In the mansion everybody was up and moving round. The Czech came to Zbyszko to ask about his health and to ascertain what were his orders.

"Draw the bed to the window," said the knight to him.

The Czech drew the bed to the window, very easily; but he was surprised when Zbyszko told him to open it. He obeyed, however, only he covered his master with his own fur coat, because

it was cold outside, although cloudy, and snow was falling.

Zbyszko began to look ; in the court-yard, through the flakes of the falling snow, one could see lights, and round them, on steaming horses, Jurand's people were standing. All were armed. The forest was entirely covered with the snow ; one could hardly see the enclosures and the gate.

Danusia, all wrapped up in furs, rushed once more into Zbyszko's room ; once more she put her arms around his neck and bade him farewell :

" Although I am going, still I am yours."

He kissed her hands, her cheeks and her eyes, and said :

" May God protect you ! May God lead you ! You are mine, mine until death !"

When they again separated them, he raised himself as much as he could, leaned his head on the window and looked out ; consequently, through the flakes of the snow, as through a veil, he saw Danusia sitting in the sleigh, the princess holding her a long time in her arms, the ladies of the court kissing her and the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak making the sign of the cross for the journey. Before the departure, she turned once more toward him, stretched out her arms and exclaimed :

" Zbyszku, remain with God !"

" May God permit me to see you in Ciechanow !"

But the snow was falling abundantly, as though to deaden every sound, and to cover everything ; therefore those last words came muffled to their ears, so that it seemed to each of them that they were already calling to each other from afar.

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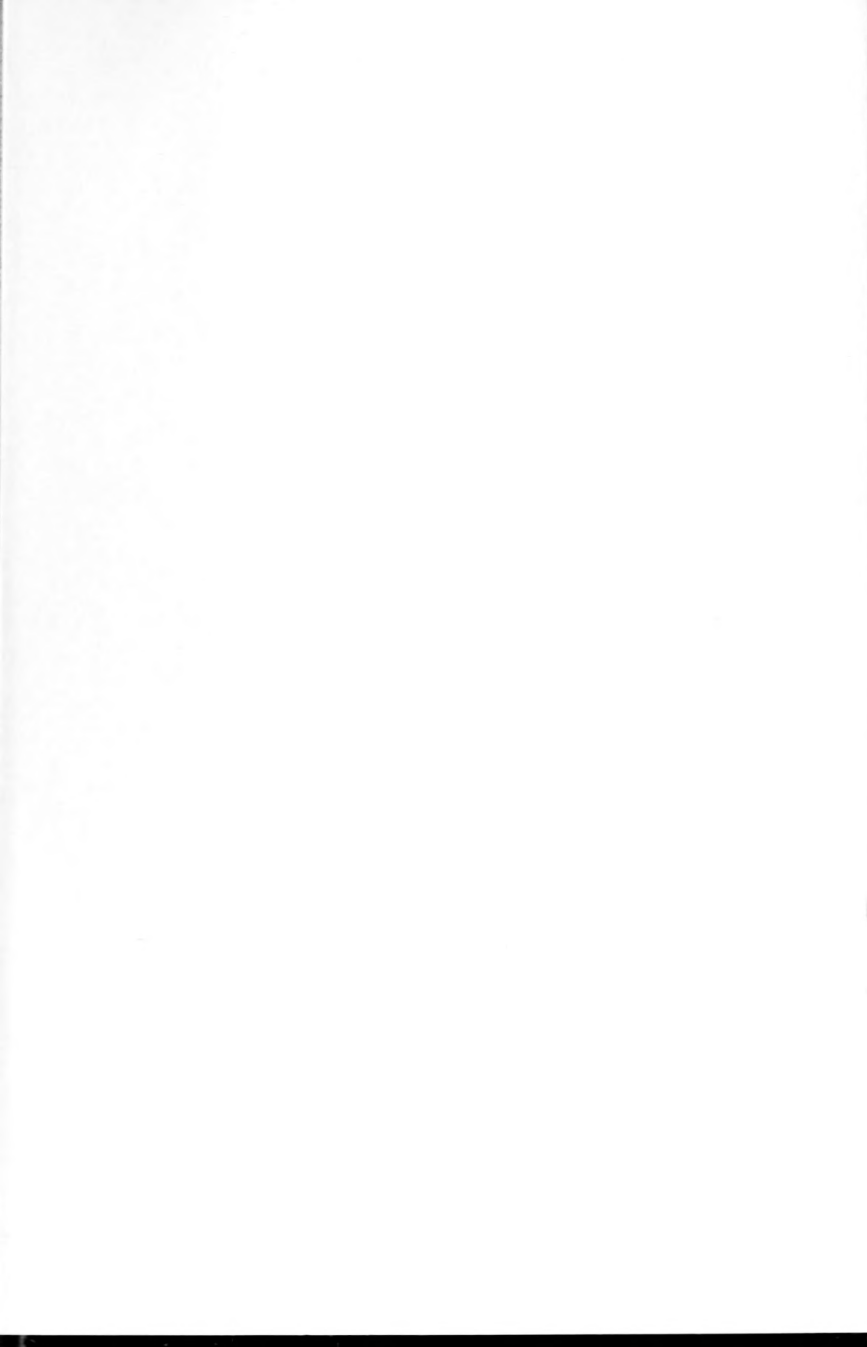
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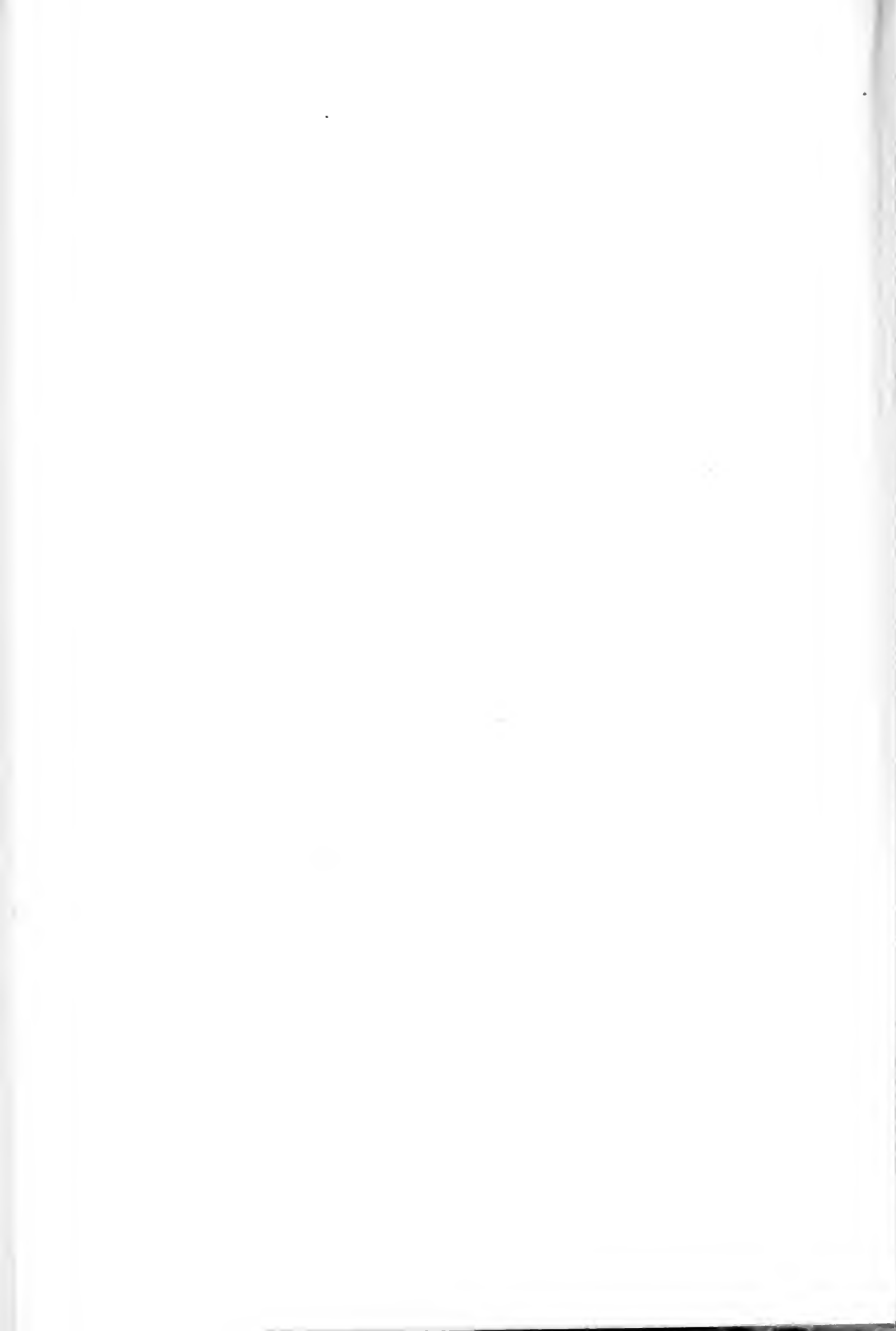
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